



BROTHERS FIC

CALLED TO BE GOOD AND TO DO GOOD



BROTHERS FIC / Vol.2 / No.6 / 2021



"Social Media and Religious Life"

The Lord is with me, so I can live my vocation as a brother while cooperating with other congregations.

Bro. M. Hans Gendut Suwardi

In Juaso Secondary School, I proved to be a good and hardworking student in the fields of academic and extra curricular activities.

Bro. Felicio Gyeyir



FIC Constitutions



1950 De postulanten van dat jaar. Jos: tweede van links

Art. 100 Preparatory period

Whoever feels a vocation to share our life must go through a preparatory period, before being admitted to the noviciate. During this preparatory periode he has the opportunity to become better acquainted with the Congregation, and the Congregation has the opportunity to come to know him. After this preparatory period, provided the candidate is admitted, the noviciate begins.

The beginning of the noviciate marks the start of life in our Congregation.



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Colophon

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From The Editor



This is the fifth publication of Volume II of the Congregational magazine “Brothers FIC” reaching you. The theme of this issue is “*Social Media and Religious Life*,” and the aim is to encourage the use of the internet and social media as means of witnessing God's love. We would like to share with our readers how we try to use “Social Media” wisely, positively and meaningfully. Social media tools such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are now part of everyday life. Used well, they can add to our call and mission meaningfully. But used poorly, they can cause lasting damage to people and our being and doing as FIC brothers.

It is important to realize that the use of social networks can promote life, and can also destroy life, especially our youth. The magazine intends to reflect on the two ways. The intention therefore is to use social media for good, to spread the good news and to promote the values of our Congregation. We need to be “in the world” and demonstrate our being and doing as FIC brothers. In using media networks, we should demonstrate God's love for humanity and how we brothers try to radiate this love to fellow human beings through our prayer, apostolate and community life. Our communication through social media networks has the fundamental motive of sharing the values and virtues of our Congregation as well as the spirit of our Founders, all for the sake of building the Kingdom of God.

Beloved reader, you will be reading about some experiences and opinions of our fellow brothers regarding the theme stated above. Bro. Augustine, our General Superior, reflects on his experience on “*Social Media, Youth and Us*.” Our brother from Chile Eustachius Ekowijayanto, sends us deeper into “*Social Media and Religious Life*”. Bro. Yustinus Juadi gives his personal experience on “*Using Social Media to witness our Christian Values*.” A further enlightenment by Bro. Raphael Besigrinee is given as usual in his reflection on the main theme.

Dear reader, two brothers will provide their profiles as usual: Hans Gendut Suwardi from Indonesia and Felicio Gyeyir from Ghana. We believe that from their sharing, our young readers will be inspired and further discover the meaning in our life and work. The rest are news from our provinces and Religious House Netherlands, news in pictures, an article from the Vatican and a short piece about Mary written by Moses Mgunda, a young brother from Malawi.

In the spirit of positive use of social media based on human, Christian and religious values, let us promote communication and building of relationships based on faith, truth and justice. During this Yuletide, allow me to wish you “*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year*” May the king of peace bring true peace in the world and may He inflame our hearts to enable us discover Christ in one another. Thank you for your attention and support to the FIC Congregation.

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Young People and their Exposure to Social Media: Implications for Evangelization of the Gospel Values

Bro. Augustine Kubdaar



In the twenty-first century, media and communication technology have penetrated all levels of society, and they appeal to everyone: children, parents, teachers, public policy makers, politicians – everyone. They are transforming teaching, evangelization and community building. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI “These spaces, when engaged in a wise and balanced way, help to foster forms of dialogue and debate which, if conducted respectfully can reinforce the bonds of unity between individuals and effectively promote the harmony of the human family”.

Today, social media have grown exponentially. Not too many generations ago, the prevalence of these communication channels was limited and accessible to only a few affluent people in society. Now everyone wants to optimize the use of the modern communication technologies. They provide people with the opportunity to access information, entertainment and communication. It is also true that many people want to know what impact media and technology are having on all of us, especially on the youth. It is important to understand the dynamics of our network society.

The exponential growth of social media and the frequent use of social media sites by adolescents

is a cause for concern. Some of the sites are unhealthy for adolescents. In view of the fact that the youth are the future leaders of the church and society, the Brothers FIC see it as part of their responsibility to draw their attention on the use of social media. During its 35th General Chapter in 2018, the Brothers FIC were led by the Holy Spirit to seriously discuss this topical issue. A resolution was made mandating its leadership to discern ways of stimulating the conscience of its members and their collaborators in the use of social media to enrich and promote the faith and values of the gospel. Therefore, in this issue of the FIC Magazine we wish to share with our cherished readers general knowledge of some benefits and risks of the use of social media. We will also offer some potential strategies which can facilitate and promote evangelization of the values of the gospel. In this way, we pray and hope that fellow Religious men and women, teachers (especially those who teach in Catholic and other faith-based institutions), youth leaders and concerned parents would benefit enormously from the content of this magazine.



Social Media and The Values of Religious Life

Bro. Raphael Besigrinee

The term "Social media" refers to forms of electronic communication through which people create online platforms or communities to share content such as information, personal messages, and videos. *"Social media are web-based communication tools that enable people to interact with each other by sharing and consuming information"* (Nations, 2021). There are many types of social media used by children and adolescents such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Youtube, etc. Social media is all about communication, and the instrument of communication the *internet*.

Benefits of social media

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool for communication, and for the past decade, has changed the dynamics of communication. Social media has had a continuing impact on the way people communicate and has actually become a central part of their lives. For instance, WhatsApp has brought about the culture of instant messaging and has put communication on a whole new level. Today, you can text anyone across the globe as long as you have an internet connection. This experience has not only been with WhatsApp but also Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. So the importance of social media in communication cannot be overvalued. The influence of social media has led to a different level of communication, where conversations take place between people as if they were in one location and information is easily relayed to others as if they were sitting in the same auditorium. The importance of social Media can be seen in several fields such as business/marketing, entertainment, evangelization, education, academic writing, lifestyle, healthcare and a host of others.

Dalomba (LICSW, February, 2020) offers the following as advantages of social media and



internet use: "staying connected with family and friends worldwide via email, text, FaceTime, etc., quick access to information and research, banking and bill payment at our finger tips, online learning, job skills, content discovery (YouTube), involvement in civic engagement (fundraising, social awareness), great marketing tools, opportunities for remote employment".

Social networks therefore provide the opportunity to connect with friends, family, and colleagues who share the same interests, and share pictures, ideas, and stories with each other. This means that FIC as a congregation can share information among its members within minutes. The General Superior can send any information to all FIC brothers with just a click of the mouse. The FIC brothers have a website: [<http://www.brothers-fic.org>]. Through this medium, we share information about our life and work in our five provinces, so that brothers in Timor Leste get to know what is happening in Ghana, for instance. This means we have an opportunity to learn new educational opportunities, develop new apostolic skills and exchange ideas on respect, tolerance, and

constructive dialogue. Apart from this, we can develop individual and collective creativity through exchanging technical ideas that will benefit our provinces.

Potential dangers of social media use

However, with all of its benefits, the use of social media networks present some potential risks for children and adolescents. Social media and Internet are not the problem, but the way they are used, can pose a great danger to the lives of young people. Experts believe that young people who spend a long period of time on social media run the risk of developing dysfunctional behaviours. The more time spent on social media can lead to cyber-bullying, social anxiety, depression, and exposure to content that is not age appropriate, says Dalomba, (2020). She explained other dangers including media addiction, fear of missing out, distorted self image, anxiety, isolation, and suicide. (Layton, 2018) also believes that adolescents everywhere are being affected by sharing sexual images (sexting) and pornography, at increasingly younger ages. The sharing of sexually explicit photos, videos, or messages, and viewing pornography has a damaging effect on the development a young person.

Adolescents are often excellent observers but poor in judgment, so they easily model their behaviour on what they see online, and indeed, they often merge what they see on social media and the Internet with how they should behave in real life. This is the danger especially where they are exposed to violence. It is believed that the average social media user spends about two hours a day on social media (Layton, 2018). Those two hours could be spent on something more productive such as doing a hobby, reading, studying, working, praying, Bible reading, eating, or even finding an extra source of income.

Evil is usually attractive to humans. Social media acts like the devil by luring people into wasting their time on it and thus destroying their plans and sometimes the plan of God. One danger is that posts on social media can pollute the minds of



Bros. Amatus Taalo and Williams Nyuzagl - secretaries during the FIC Ghana Provincial Conference 2021.

young people. With all kinds of attractive things being posted, shared and spread through social media, the mind can easily get excited and this can lure people to do the inappropriate. "There is a lot of "rubbish" spreading on social media, and we need to have the courage to close the tabs on the browser and exit the page if the content is disturbing, not to mention stimulating towards sin" (Layton 2018).

How should we use social media?

The dangers connected with the use of social media do not suggest that people should avoid using these tools like WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook or Twitter. What I am saying is that these social media sites can be very helpful if used appropriately; but we should be aware that they can also pose a threat to our lives, especially for Christians who wish to follow the example of Jesus Christ. We should never use social media with the intention of doing wrong. It is an avenue we can easily hide behind or where nobody can identify us easily, so the temptation to engage in any sinful activity becomes greater. We must take note of this!

As FIC brothers, just as with every Christian, it behoves on us to use the internet and social media "as means of witnessing God's love" (Gen.

Chap. reso. 32B). We have a choice in using these media channels, and we must make a conscious effort to opt for the benefits and advantages of this technology, or from a religious perspective. *"This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live"*(Deut. 30:19). So what values do we aim at promoting through social media channels? The religious values FIC brothers have been promoting are summed up in the three pillars of religious life, namely *community life, apostolate and prayer*, and those values that are in accordance with the spirit of our founders.

Can social media promote community life in our congregation? Yes! "Social media can support communities in a myriad of ways: connecting people with similar interests, sharing information about persons or events, providing ways for people to engage in dialogue, etc" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB, 2014). Using social networks to form and promote "community," Pope Francis said, implies encouraging interaction, support and solidarity. The Pope believes that virtual communities are worthy of the name community and of Christian participation only if they strengthen a personal encounter. But he warns that "social media interaction should not be viewed as a substitute for face-to-face gatherings". It will be a great value if social media are used to enrich

community life rather than distract it. Using mobile phones during community recreation isolates the user and disrupts community life. Social media must not be used as means of avoiding fraternal community life or causing harm to a fellow brother's vocation. It should be used for human development, promoting justice and peace, building personal relationships and improving communication in the community.

The FIC Constitution spells out our principal apostolic tradition as "**education, formation and teaching**". It is more than easier now to use the internet or social media to communicate effectively the Christian values and those of the Congregation to millions of people around the world than before. It is for this reason that in 2014, the General Council developed the FIC website and began publishing the FIC magazine. In this way, we intend to use the internet and social media as means to show our identity and mission to the world as religious brothers in the Church. As long as it is used positively, properly and wisely, it will achieve the desired results, namely spreading Christian values among young people. Social media are anti-social, anti-human and anti-Christian when they are used to increase differences, fuel suspicion, spread lies and vent prejudice" (*Pope Francis, World Communications Day, 2019*). The Pope has urged us (religious) to use social media to enhance our efforts to further our congregational mission: to make Jesus better known and loved, especially among the young, through education and instruction. We should see social media as a great potential in bringing young people together, helping them to share useful information, and an opportunity to educate and form them.

Social media have offered us many possibilities of praying online and employing media gadgets in our prayers and spiritual development through private messaging, and multimedia sharing of voice, video, images, and files. As mentioned earlier, the FIC website and FIC magazine are already serving the purpose of spreading Christian values around the world, especially our mission areas. But there are numerous other possibilities of employing social media for our spiritual development. Pope Benedict XVI invited



Social Media and Religious Life

Christians to join online social networks in order to spread the Gospel through digital media and discover “an entirely new world of potential friendships” (Vatican, 2012). He said proclaiming the Gospel through new media was not simply a matter of inserting religious content into online platforms, but also of witnessing the Gospel consistently when communicating choices, preferences and judgments.

Pope Francis has created a media platform called *Click To Pray* which invites men and women all over the world, to accompany the Pope in praying for God's compassion for the world. It has a website [www.clicktopray.org] and a mobile app. This is the official website of the *Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network* in the service of humanity's challenges and mission of the Church. We are all invited to join this prayer network. It is a useful prayer movement which helps us pray for the challenges facing humanity. By this example, we are encouraged to form similar prayer movements or network communities on social media to pray for our needs without physical gatherings. However, Pope Benedict advises us to adhere to the “Christian way” of being online, namely through communication that is “honest and open, responsible and respectful of others,”. Even when the *Word* is proclaimed in the virtual space of the Web, the Gospel demands to be incarnated in the real world and linked to the real faces of our brothers and sisters,” he said.

Conclusion

The church does not forbid the use of social media; rather we should use them with moderation and an unpolluted intention. As religious, FIC brothers are expected to communicate more with God and spend less time on social media. Too much time spent on Internet and social media intrudes on a life of prayer and contemplation if we have to uphold the values distinctive to our life. “These means must therefore be used with sobriety and discretion, not only with regard to the contents but also to the quantity of information and the type of communication, so that they are at the service of contemplative life and necessary



Bro. Theodorus and Indonesian priests, sisters and brothers in The Netherlands, dancing “Poco-Poco” at a Christmas gathering in 2019.

communications, and not an occasion for dissipation”(Zwierchowski, 2017). Clearly, Internet and social media can prove useful to religious congregations in terms of communication, education, formation, teaching and all forms of evangelization. To the extent that they do not prove harmful to our vocation or become an obstacle to our life, their use can be very valuable for spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” (Philippians 4:8)



The Divine Hope Through Technology

Bro. Justinus Juadi

The growth and development of one's faith this present time are not done by parents, priests, brothers and monks only! The advancement of technology in human life also contributes to the development of someone's faith. How is that possible?

Sharing the Hope

Human life cannot be separated from technology. The growth of technology greatly helps human work. Technology has succeeded in helping humans to interact and share the good tidings of Jesus Christ. Through technology, one can share the hope by means of prayers, guidance, meditation, reflection, teaching, counseling, and so on. Nowadays, people are fast and excited about looking for information, intellectual knowledge, knowledge on our faith through social media rather than going to the bookstore. People now find it easier to seek for both scientific references and things related to human and God in social media (read: pray). For instance, those who are sick or in pain and are expecting healing can seek treatment for all kinds of diseases. Those longing for spiritual peace can seek for meditation or prayer guidance. Two years ago, I started sharing my prayer experiences on YouTube channel "Doa Katolik-Juadi FIC". This channel has several prayer types that I write on my own, but there are also church and general prayers. One of the most viewed prayers is "One Hour Prayer for Healing from the Bible". In five months the number of viewers reached 380.000. This is followed by Night Prayer, Rosary for Healing, A Prayer for Healing through Intercession of Mother Mary, Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and so on with a total of 2.996.142 viewers. From the data, it turned out that there are many people who are longing for healing. They are facing some struggles and are expecting a miracle from God through prayers.



One of the means through which they obtain God's mercy for their struggles is prayer (also by doing medical treatment). They also perform *the hope on Divine Lord* through technology. This can be seen from the comments section on the YouTube channel.

From the comments received, I believe that when someone is going through struggle, he has the biggest hope of recovery (especially for those who are in pain). For instance, from the comments on YouTube channel "Doa Katolik-Juadi FIC", I have the following:

"O Jesus Christ, have mercy on me. Reach out Your hand, O Lord, Jesus. I hope in you, heal me. Save me and heal me from the minor stroke, ataxia cerebellum and asphyxiate."

"O Lord Jesus Christ, You are Lord, the Almighty. Heal me and save me from the pain that I suffer."



Bro. Justinus Juadi editing a video for his You-tube Channel

From the expression of their hearts seen in the comments section, there are three things that happen within them when they are expecting healing. First, a desire or longing. We look for things that we expect. Secondly, believe. We believe that things which we expect are possible. Thirdly, hesitation. We hesitate that things we expect might not happen. Lewis B. Smedes in his book *"How Can It Be All Right When Everything Is All Wrong"* writes "expectation is wanting something that we do not have yet." Just believing that certain things will happen in future does not mean they will surely happen.

Hoping is believing. We believe that what we want in the future is still far from being possible. Hope is built on possibilities. If we are sure that we will not recover, we don't need to expect healing. We may

expect things that are still possible even though not certain. If we expect, it means we are also hesitant, yet anxious. We cannot dispel doubts because we are not sure. Hesitation is the third dimension of hope. If a team has the possibility of winning a game, it means they might also lose. If there are possibilities to find medicine for tumor, there are also possibilities to fail in finding the medicine. We expect and believe; at the same time we are anxious and hesitant. It is so human. That is what we do when we expect something. "Now hope does not disappoint" (Rome 5:5). The divine hope of Christians is a blessing from God. We have hope not because we deserve it. Hope is not obtained because of the ability to read the signs of times.

Preaching through Social Media

There are many things that we can do to encounter God on social media. Nowadays, almost all dioceses, congregations, parishes, schools, ecclesiastical institutions use social media to preach, especially on YouTube. We may join the holy mass by live streaming. We can take part in spiritual activities like seminars and prayer sessions by live streaming. The FIC congregation owns a YouTube channel *Bruder FIC*. This channel has 1.550 subscribers with 66.184 viewers. If this channel is used for faith preaching through uploading daily reflections and prayer, we can preach God effectively and reach out to many.

As part of our mission as FIC we can partner with Jesus Christ in giving hope, happiness and affirmation to people through technology or social media. Then, let Jesus do the rest. Helping people encounter God through social media is our duty as followers of Jesus. All of us have an important task: to preach the gospel and heal the sick. Every follower of Jesus must preach the gospel with no exception. Jesus tells us: "Go out into the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15). Jesus said: "they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Our presence to the sick really influences their emotions. If we frequently visit sick people, they will truly feel our sympathy. If we cannot be with them physically, we can show our presence in prayer through social media.

With No Boundaries

Someone who wants to share the hope through social media must encourage himself to open his heart. If some of us want to share that hope, let us do that. "Judge not, that you be not judged." (Mat 7:1) and do not give labels to others for it is inappropriate, not proper.

Preaching through social media has no boundaries. We can reach out to as many people as possible. We can reach thousands of people



It takes time to edit a video before uploading on the You-tube channel.

that we do not even know. This means the faith we proclaim is not limited to the pulpit. Technology has become a new means to draw people closer to the divine God. Let us not reject technology because through it, Jesus goes on preaching all the time.

[Bro. Justinus Juadi lives in Tanjung community, Kalimantan Barat]

GHANA

Provincial Conference 2021, Ghana



Bro. Seregeous Dery (Provincial Superior) presenting the Provincial Council report to delegates of the Provincial Conference 2021.

The FIC Brothers of Ghana held their provincial conference in St. Louis community conference hall – Wa, from 14 – 17 November, 2021 under the theme *"Deepening our Apostolic Mission through Prayer and Community Life"*. Delegates from various communities within the Province arrived in St. Louis Community the evening before in readiness for the conference. In the morning of 14 November, the conference officially opened with a prayer service. The Provincial Superior in his welcome address, called on delegates to observe objectivity in discussing issues and tolerance for the opinions of others. He read out a good will message from the General Superior, Bro. Augustine Kubdaar, to the delegates. The conference, which was considered a mid-way evaluation of the term of office of the present Provincial Council, was attended by 19 delegates including the Provincial Council members and two secretaries.

Issues discussed during the conference were among others, the Provincial Council's report, small group and plenary discussion and



Small group discussion during the Ghana Province Conference in Wa 2021.
L-R: Bros. Gracious, Joachim, Anacletus, Clovis and Fabian K.

presentation of the PC report and the auditor's report on the accounts of FIC Ghana Province from 2018 to 2021.

MALAWI

Reflection on Provincial Conference 2021 – Malawi

Bro. Mike Mbato

The FIC Brothers of the Malawi province held their provincial chapter in 2018 under the theme *Improving our apostolic activities by deepening our identity as religious brothers in the church*. This chapter proposed to the incoming provincial council to organize a mini chapter in 2021. This mini -chapter will enable the brothers do an evaluation of the functioning of the current provincial council team (proposal 6B), and how far they have implemented the proposals agreed upon by the provincial chapter 2018. The Provincial Council proposed to hold a provincial conference from 8th -10th November, 2021 at Bethel Provincial House. The conference was guided by the theme ***"My contribution towards the growth of the province and the congregation"***.



Delegates of the FIC Provincial Conference 2021 in Malawi, Facilitator Fr. Kasitomu, MCCJ (standing 4th from Left) and secretary (far right)

The conference which took place at Bethel, the Provincial House, officially opened on 8 November 2021 with a prayer service. They were ten delegates including the provincial council members. In his opening address, the Provincial Superior Bro. Lawrence Sitima gave a reminder to the participants in the following words: “The Provincial Chapter 2018 mandated the current Provincial Council to hold a mini-chapter midway during their tenure in office, to enable the brothers do an evaluation on the functioning of the team” (proposal 6c revised). The discussions and reflections of the conference therefore focused on the implementation of the provincial as well as the 2018 General Chapter resolutions, and the contribution of brothers in their implementation.

He added that his work as Provincial Superior with three councilors in the past three (3) years has been for him a period of learning and increased knowledge and understanding of himself, his work and fellow brothers. He said the three-year period has been a time of growth for the brothers and more awareness of what each brother strives to do individually and for the province as a whole. He recognized that there is relative peace in the province and in our country at large. In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, brothers have made progress in their apostolate. The conference also provided an opportunity to the council members to share their personal experiences during their

three years in office. This comprised their joys and challenges of working together and individually.

The Provincial Superior then shared with delegates the joys and worries of the province. He cited the joys of the province as growth in unity among the brothers, willingness to share with other communities, appreciation of the vulnerability of each other, sharing of responsibilities, some improvement in the quality of community life, collective discernment, brothers' spirit of service to the poor and needy of society and growth in vocations.

On the other hand, the province has been experiencing some challenges, and these include lack of leadership in FIC learning institutions, shortage of formation personnel both in initial and ongoing formation among others.

The conference went further to discuss reports of provincial committees. The provincial council in their first newsletter publication of January 2021, re-composed these committees as follows: formation team, vocation promotion team, prayer team, income generating activity, education committee, and finance. The Provincial Superior regretted that all the committees were dormant except the vocation promotion committee, and expressed his gratitude to the committee for the work they have been doing in the past three years.



*Bro. Lawrence Sitima (Left)
Provincial Superior of Malawi
at the Provincial Conference 2021.*

At this point, the resolutions of the 2018 provincial chapter were discussed. Those the Provincial Council was able to fully implement include:

- I. Revision of the 2018 Provincial Statutes
- II. Maintenance of Likulezi house
- III. Acquisition of piece of land in Lilongwe (proposal #5)
- IV. Review of courses to align with TEVETA at Mitengo Technical College.

Another issue that took a centre stage at the conference is the need to develop the spirit of transparency and accountability, not only with finances but with our time, resources/goods and even with our decisions. All congregational property must also be taken care of as a means of reducing cost on maintenance. Accountability and transparency are religious values we should promote in the congregation as these lead to greater openness and trust. There was a lengthy discussion on this issue in order to find ways to curb it. The facilitator added his voice by suggesting that "accountability and transparency also demands personal responsibility, consciousness and discipline." As a young brother I see it as a responsibility to be transparent and accountable as my contribution towards the growth of the province and the congregation.

In his concluding remarks the Provincial Superior expressed gratitude to God and fellow brothers for the success of the conference. He described the three day-period as the best time to deal with some important issues of the province. He said the conference was not meant to solve all the

problems of Malawi Province, but rather to drum home the awareness that every brother is responsible for the growth of the province and not only the Provincial Council.

The conference officially concluded in the afternoon of Wednesday, 10 November 2021, with a Eucharistic celebration. At the end of the conference the brothers assured the Provincial Council of their support during the remaining three years in office. A word of gratitude was also expressed to the FIC General Council and other brothers from different provinces for their prayers and words of encouragement during the conference.

CHILE

Provincial Chapter 2021, Chile

Bro. Patricio Guentelican



*Provincial Council members of FIC Chile Province.
L-R: Bros. Patricio Guentelican Perez (Councillor),
Lucio Torres Martin (Provincial Superior),
and Javier Solis Urbano (Vicar)*

We brothers of Chile held our Provincial Chapter 2021 from Monday, October 18 to Thursday, October 21 in Betalpu, a house of reflection in Talca. We were accompanied by Fr. Roberto Toro, as moderator, and Mrs. Verónica Figueroa, as secretary. Both contributed their expertise and human warmth to the success of the chapter.



*Brothers FIC of Chile Province
L-R: Bros. Eustachius Ekowijayanto,
Diego Izquierdo Gallego,
Marcelo Sandoval Munoz,
Lucio Torres Martin, Ge van Vugt,
Javier Solis Urbano, Yohanes Krismanto,
and Patricio Guentelican Perez*

Prior to the chapter, the pre-chapter commission, made up of brothers Diego, Marcelo and Eko, handed us various documents that helped us to enter the chapter in a comfortable mood and in an atmosphere of fraternity. It was nice to be able to get together again after two years of failure to have frequent encounters, due to the covid -19 pandemic. The moments of prayer and being able to celebrate the Eucharist every day were a blessing, thanks to the presence of Fr. Roberto.

On Monday, October 18, 2021, with the theme "*If you say so ... we will sail out to sea*", the Provincial Chapter of the Brothers of the Immaculate Conception was inaugurated. The Provincial Superior, Brother Diego Izquierdo, pointed out in his opening words that we live in a time of uncertainty as a province, but confident that Jesus and his Spirit would make all things new.

Regarding the challenges, he said it is necessary to respond to the reality of our leadership as religious, understand it and define it with a view to the future, not only because of what they have experienced in

the past, but also because of their ability to carry it out. He added that listening and leadership in mission with the laity are essential for the future of the province.

After discussing and making some decisions about the methodology, the brothers had a moment of reflection accompanied by Fr. Roberto Toro, who addressed the reality of the Church, vocations, life in community, among other topics. During the afternoon, the matter of the three-year period of the Provincial Council of Chile was reviewed.

In the following days, we reflected and shared, both in groups and in plenary sessions, on our consecration, the vision of the current situation in the province, the gaze of its collaborators and the most suitable organizational structure for the future.

Among the conclusions drawn in the plenary discussion include the importance of strengthening community life, work on external leaderships, but above all, community leadership. The others are growing in fraternity, dialogue and accompaniment between brothers. There is the need to prioritize and empower the

community, give it the relevance it needs, and not get so much absorbed by the tasks involved in the works. It was also important to explore a suitable balance among community, prayer and apostolate.

One issue that also engaged us was restructuring the organization of the educational mission in Chile, to help the Provincial Council make decisions and safeguard the mission according to the founding principles of FIC. From all the reflection and discussion, seven proposals were endorsed in this chapter, which include, among others, strengthening our community life, opening up our communities, FIC apostolic presence in Chile and leadership training.

In the final week of the chapter, after reflection and prayer, the following brothers were elected to form the new provincial council for the next 3 years (2021-2024): Bro. Lucio Torres (Provincial Superior), Bro. Javier Solís (Vicar) and Bro. Patricio Guentelacán (Councilor).

Bearing in mind the reflections and hopes that we have for the future, a chapter message was approved for the brothers and people of good will, affirming that "going out to sea is taking risks, and at the same time daring to set a course. Thus, lines of action have emerged that will guide our provincial community towards a more certain horizon. The experience of the chapter allows us to look into the future with hope and determination."

Gratitude was expressed to the Superior General, Bro. Augustine Kubdaar, who in their good will message, invites us to grow even more in a deeper feeling of being brothers to one another.

INDONESIA

Celebrating the Gift of Life

Bro. Michael Sidarta



Eucharistic celebration on 21st November (Congregational day) in Saint Lukas Senior High School, Pemalang (Central Java)

We are grateful that the FIC Congregation is under the protection of Mary our immaculate Mother. November 21 is celebrated every year as the birthday of our Congregation. This year (2021) in Indonesia province, we celebrated the presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to God. It may be that every November 21 we also celebrate the dedication of our Congregation to God. Let us begin with a verse from the scriptures: "Be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things" (Matthew 6:33). This Bible verse deserves to be an affirmation of the 21 November 2021 celebration of faith for the Indonesian brothers.

The 2018 Indonesian Provincial Chapter asked the brothers to confirm their life identity as FIC brothers. We have learned a lot about how we live our lives as FIC brothers. We learned from the founders of our Congregation, Mgr. Rutten and Bro. Bernard Hoecken. We are still learning from the Congregation's documents - the history, the Constitution, and the traditions of the Congregation. We learned that from the beginning of the Congregation till today, life in the congregation has always been a sacrifice. Only in this way will the Congregation continue to possess the gifts of God. The Bible verse above is very accurate in our situation: as long as the FIC



Prayer service of FIC Community in Wedi, Klaten(Central Java) led by Bro. Yohanes Sumardi (Local Superior)

Congregation first seeks the Kingdom of God and its righteousness, then everything that the FIC Congregation needs will be provided.

At least during our celebration in November 21, 2021, we expressed gratitude to God for the favours we have received so far. The celebration took place in several FIC communities and in different forms. In Sukaraja Sumatra, the celebration started with the Eucharist, followed by a blessing of the new Girls' Dormitory of Pangudi Luhur Sukaraja High School. For decades, the brothers have tried to promote the Kingdom of God through educational work for young people here. The struggle of the brothers in Sukaraja is well known and very real. Therefore, with solidarity fund from the General Council, this project for the female students at this High School was realized. The celebration was attended by teachers and employees of the school as well as students and staff from the junior high school. The community around Pangudi Luhur Sukaraja High Schools gave their overwhelming support during the celebration. The brothers cannot be more grateful to God for the immense grace received this year.

In Pemalang, the brothers received a new car to support the activities of Pangudi Luhur High School. The gift was never imagined before. Apparently the community appreciates the efforts of the brothers in their mission to bring the Kingdom of God to the youth and local church in Pemalang. In other communities the celebration was attended by some sisters, priests, and other

collaborators of the FIC brothers. The presence of other religious and priests is a tangible manifestation of God's grace that continues to be felt among the FIC brothers in Indonesia.

Several communities such as Giriwoyo, Kembangan and Haji Nawi in Jakarta also had a Eucharistic celebration to mark the day. The priest who presided over the Eucharist in the Kembangan Community is a former student of Pangudi Luhur Elementary School in Jakarta. His presence to celebrate mass is a confirmation that the seeds of the Kingdom of God sown by the brothers decades ago are now bearing fruit. We are grateful for this. The FIC Congregation can only continue to live and develop if it is supported by our collaborators and people of good will. Therefore, the presence of the sisters, priests, and parishioners in the celebration of November 21 is a sign that God is guiding the FIC brothers in their mission in Indonesia. May we strive to imitate Mother Mary who dedicated her life to God till the end. Only then will we remain alive in God's presence and blessing.

[Michael Sidarta is the vice Provincial Superior of Indonesia]



Provincial Superior, Bro. Lawrence Sitima with four brothers after renewal of vows 2021
L-R: Bros. Daniel Kanyada, Moses Mgunda, the Provincial, Mike Mbato and Chancy Mfune.



Canonical visit to the FIC Province of Indonesia by Bros. Valentinus Daru Setiaji and Theodorus Suwariyanto. (September 2021). They were ready to visit some FIC Schools in Setipayan and the parents of two fellow brothers in the Island of Kalimantan. L-R: Bro. Theodorus S., Mr. Hamzah (Headmaster of Pangudi Luhur Setipayan Elementary School), Bros. Yustinus Juadi, Valentinus Daru S., and Eko Wahyudi.



On Friday, November 19, 2021, Bro. Linus Delle of Ghana province said his final 'yes' to the Lord through the profession of final vows before the people of God. The Eucharist was presided by His Lordship Most Rev. Richard Kuuia Baawobr, M. Afr.



Bro. Augustine Kubdaar (General Superior) giving a presentation at the conclusion of the canonical visit to Malawi Province. (Canonical visit by Bros. Augustine Kubdaar and Raphael Besigrinee in October 2021)



Bros. Wim Luiten, Jos Bom, Jozef Hengst, Mr. Theo de Groot, Late Bro. Kees van de Wiel and our friends during the celebration of the Feast of Assumption of Mary on 15th August 2021.



Provincial Chapter of FIC Chile Province, 18th-21st October 2021.
L-R: Bros. Yohanes Krismanto, Diego Izquierdo Gallego, Patricio Guentelican P., Marcelo Sandoval M., Ge van Vugt, Javier Solis Urbano, Eustachius Ekowijayanto, and Lucio Torres Martin.

I Love The Lord Jesus More

Bro. M. Hans Gendut Suwardi



Currently, I am the Investment Director of a Foundation known as Yadapen in Indonesia. This foundation manages pension contributions for

employees of Catholic foundations and institutions in almost all of Indonesia. There are only two Catholic Pension Foundations in Indonesia, namely the Yadapen and the Indonesian Bishops' Conference Pension Fund. Currently, Yadapen has 285 members with active participants of around 23,000 employees. The founders and administrators of Yadapen consist of priests, brothers, sisters from various Congregations and practitioners who are experts in their fields, both lecturers and businessmen.

Working outside FIC apostolic area, especially with other congregations is not easy. It requires a lot of effort. I realized that I work at Yadapen as a representative of the FIC congregation. This requires of me to be wise and careful in my actions and words. This spirit is in accordance with our Constitutions, articles 23 and 24, which state as follows: In our apostolic dedication we are expected to work in whatever way and place the Congregation, through our authorities, requests of us, also when the request is counter to our desires, preferences, or judgments. This may be extremely difficult, but as religious we make ourselves available, to the full (art.23). Total availability further entails, that we readily pursue co-operation with others; as when employed outside our Congregation; and again in subordinate posts (art.24).

If I had a choice I would prefer to work only within FIC environment. Why? Humanly speaking, working in our own environment will be easier;

colleagues and fellow brothers are easier to understand, especially in times of difficulties. But when working outside the Congregation, the parties are not easy to understand because of differences in charisma, spirituality, and other habits. However, God is all-wise. The Lord is with me, so I can live my vocation as a brother while cooperating with other congregations. I feel that God is always present in my life's journey, and I can do all things through Him who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13). That is the motto of my life. I have lived this motto since I joined the FIC Congregation. He is the one who called me to be a Brother. He is also the one who accompanies me in my vocation.

With this belief, I am happy as a brother, and can confidently continue my task outside the Congregation. I am also grateful for the support and trust from my leaders and fellow brothers. It means a lot because their trust in me makes me even more confident. When I believe in myself, other people will believe in me. I am fortunate to be able to gain a lot of knowledge through meetings and collaboration with priests, brothers



*Provincial Council of FIC Indonesia Province, 2018 - 2024
L-R: Bros. Martinus Gendut Suwardi, Antonius Karyadi,
Yohanes Bosco Purwanto, Michael Sidharta Susila (Vicar),
and Fransiskus Asisi Dwiayatno (Provincial Superior)*

and sisters from various congregations. I have also learned a lot from lecturers and businessmen or entrepreneurs, who are administrators of Yadapen. I was accepted to be a part of Yadapen not because of my abilities, but because I am FIC Brother. I am glad with the remark that my presence has brought a fresh and joyful atmosphere to the work.

In addition to working at Yadapen, I also study at Soegijapranata Catholic University, Semarang. The experience in the first semester made me realize how important it is to learn to read a book. As a 44 year old brother who has not done formal studies again since 2004, adjusting to my fellow students who are just only 20, poses another challenge. I am often called grandfather brother. Even so, I learned to feel comfortable with them. The spirit and motivation to study is strongly supported and affirmed in our Constitutions: "Not only during our formative years, but throughout our lives, we should be open to development, formation, and deepening the meaning of our lives. As persons and as a community we should seek this in various ways. This too is an expression of faithfulness to our vocation. Our vocation requires us to go on training ourselves for our task, to keep abreast of developments in the church and society, to have a ready eye to the signs of the times; and to continue developing our spiritual growth" (Art 115).

I felt grateful to this Congregation when during the Provincial Chapter 2018, the brothers chose me to be a member of the Provincial Council. I actually felt that I did not deserve to be a Councilor because of my limitations. However, God chose me in spite of my weaknesses. It is for me an extraordinary gift. By asking for the protection of our Mother Mary, I believe I can live this call if I trust in Divine Providence, just as Mary did. I can say with Mary "I am a servant of God, let it happen to me as You said."

Throughout my life and search for my vocation I have felt God's love accompanying me until this time, and I can say I now feel that I have finally and firmly answered God's love. I recall an experience when I was a Postulant in Muntilan. At that time, the father of my ex-girlfriend came to the postulants' community and asked me why I never came again to visit his daughter. I was surprised by the question.



Bro. Martinus Gendut Suwardi (standing: 6th from Left) among the board of the Foundation known as Yadapen in Indonesia (Pengurus Yayasan Dana Pensiun)

After some reflective moments, I told him: "I'm sorry sir, it doesn't mean I don't love your daughter, but I love the Lord Jesus more". The father of my ex-girlfriend understood me and the decision I had made. He even promised to support me with his prayers to continue my life to be a religious. That is an experience I have treasured to this day. This remains a firm answer to many of my challenges in life, especially when things get tough, I repeat those words again, "I love the Lord Jesus more".

Finally, I believe that God's plan is truly beautiful in its own time, especially His plan for me. By my calling as a brother and from my life experiences, I know God has loved me since birth. The knowledge of being loved and loving is a meaningful experience in the vocation of being a brother. It is the experience that makes me love God even more through this call. Living as a brother makes me happy because I always feel God's love not only from my parents or family but also through my fellow brothers, co-workers, and the people I serve. To be a brother is a call to be happy. I am increasingly convinced that God has a way of giving His blessings to everyone.

[Bro. Hans Gendut is a Provincial Councillor, Supervisor of Pangudi Luhur Foundation, and Investment Director of Yadapen]

Profile of Bro. Felicio Gyeyir



Family Background

I was born some 55 years ago at Goziir Nandom to Victorinus Gyeyir and Aurelia Naabekyaa. I am the eighth

born of a family of ten: six boys and four girls. I grew up in the village like any other young Dagao boy doing the usual work of my people: farming, tending cows, goats, sheep and chickens, among others. My parents are peasant farmers; this they did as a source of income to take care of the family. Life for me as a child was very simple and full of fun. My father was very hardworking and used to encourage us to do the same in whatever we did. He was very generous with his affirmation or rewards, and would also sternly deal with you, in case of any deviation from what was considered to be normal.

My parents were not only hardworking on the farm but they were also hardworking on their Christian faith, from which I had my religious vocation. My father made sure that we said our prayers in the morning and would stay awake to make sure that we say evening prayers before retiring to bed. My parents worked strenuously over the years to bring us up to fit into both informal and formal education at various levels and at the same time, occupy responsible positions in human endeavour.

Education and Work Experience

In 1975, I was sent to St. Paul's Primary School rather late, to start my formal education. From

here, I continued to St. Andrew's Continuation Middle School, finished in 1984 and sat for the then common entrance examination. This qualified me to attend Kanton Secondary school, Tumu in the upper West Region. Unfortunately, the school went on brutal strike in 1987 and that left many of us wandering around for years. Through the assistance of one of my brothers, I was admitted on probation, defying the orders by Ghana Education Service not to admit any student from the above mentioned school. In Juaso Secondary School, I proved to be a good and hardworking student in the fields of academic and extra curricular activities.

All along I had the ambition of becoming a teacher, probably drawing inspirations from my two sisters and a brother who were teachers, and even happened to be my teachers during my early formative years. Through the encouragement and support of one of the teachers in Juaso Secondary School, I got admission into St Joseph Teacher Training College to be trained as a 3-year Post-secondary Certificate "A" teacher.

Having completed successfully, I was posted to St. Kizito' Junior Secondary School in Bole to teach Social Studies and Cultural Studies - a job I did with all dedication and commitment. It was at Bole that I had my call to be a brother. I applied to the then vocation director, Bro. Aloysius Porekuu after reading about it in Catholic Standard newspaper. The reply came within a short time but through a different vocation director, and shortly afterwards, a letter of invitation to attend the aspirants' meeting in St Louis Formation Center. From the thirteen aspirants that attended the contact days, I was the only one selected to start formation, to my surprise, because that was my first encounter days and many brothers never

met me before. With a feeling of uncertainty, I moved into the formation house to try my lack as I put it before my fellow teachers and students in St. Kizito's Junior Secondary School. In the first three months, I was like a fish being cast out of water on the bank of a river. I was panting and panicking all through. In spite of all these, I maintained a constant determination to persevere in the life.

As a Religious Brother

I made my first commitment as a religious brother in 1998, in a solemn mass officiated by the then Bishop of Wa, after which I was posted to St. Louis Formation Center and assigned to St. Cecilia's Primary School as a classroom teacher. I was however transferred to the Provincial House after one year but still maintained my apostolate at St. Cecilia's Primary School. Later, I was transferred again to Tumu community after two years in the Provincial House to teach and head St. Mary's Primary and Junior Secondary School, a job that was very demanding and challenging at the same time. I stayed in St. Mary's for two years. I always look back at those two years as the most challenging times in my teaching career.

In 2003, the congregation asked me to go to the Institute for Continuing Formation (ICF) and, at the same time, plans were underway for me to go for further studies in the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) - Nairobi Kenya, where I successfully completed and obtained bachelor of education in Religious and Moral Education and Social Education and Ethics.

When I returned from Kenya armed with my University Degree I thought I would have been sent to a secondary school to teach. Rather I was asked to do religious formation at the Institute for Continuing Formation, Cape Coast for the second time. In 2007 I was asked to join the formation team of Ghana province, and again in 2012 I was given permission to go back to the Catholic university to do Masters in Counseling



Bro. Felicio Gyeyir among students of St. Louis Educational Complex - Wa

Psychology. I am currently in St. Louis community and teaching at the Nusrat Jahan Ahmadiyya College of Education- Wa.

My Eye on the New Normal

Social media has traditionally been a place for people to connect with each other and share photos and videos. Nowadays, it is much more than that. Social media is now an integral part of everyone's life, more especially the youth. Its impact has both positive and negative sides. It is easier to make friends on social media sites. In fact, this has changed the entire idea of making friends. It allows the youth to make friends with others, all over the world and talk with them for unlimited hours, whenever they want. Nowadays, even video chatting is free. A social site like Facebook has allowed an instant contact with long lost friends. It is a blessing for both extroverts and introverts and all social youths, since they are able to connect with friends anytime anywhere. We can share all kinds of experiences with

people and vice versa. This leads to stronger and easier relationship and bonding between friends.

Psychology will tell us that friendship teaches youth empathy, an emotion that is important in our growth to adulthood. Socializing also makes us relax mentally after school and help get through tough situations. We all know that the youth today live in an extremely busy world either in school, at home, and or other social fields. There is sometimes hardly any time for anything else. Social media sites give everyone a chance to communicate effectively and quickly for many different reasons. People can talk to many friends at the same time. Social networking sites not only allow people to get in touch with old friends, but they also help develop new network of friends and other contacts that might help people at various stages of life. Never before had students been able to help each other in such an instant way with educational inquiry, school tips, project advice, and examination preparation.

On the other hand, social media can have a negative impact on the youth as well. As with games and TV, it's quite possible to become addicted like any other addiction. They get glued to the internet for hours, checking their accounts, and neglecting their studies. There is a phenomenon that is developing: dying of the reading culture. The extreme use of technology can affect productivity, mental, and physical health. Just as there are unfortunately bullies at schools, there are cyber bullies too, and in this new normal, media use should be monitored and complaints looked into.

It is vital that information on the internet be used and shared with responsibility. Beneficial as it is, it can be harmful as well if not used wisely. Social media can be both a boon and bane to the youth. Individual responsibility is key within a regulated set of rules. The youth today must be educated on how to use it; more to the point, they should be conscious of the positive and negative impacts of their use, on their development.



*Bro. Felicio Gyeyir (second from right) during the Formators' meeting (2016) in Syalom Retreat House, Bandung, Indonesia.
(L-R: Bros. Seregeous Dery, Godwin Kuu-ireme, Felicio Gyeyir, and Alpitio Kog)*

Dangers can arise in many guises: teenagers can use this platform for stalking other people, harassing them in different ways with texting, and sending objectionable content. Many website policies make the account information public and youths are often not aware of that when they blindly allow and permit access. Irresponsible behaviour can lead to privacy breaches and unacceptable sharing of content. Social media use can lead to serious consequences such as hacking of social media accounts and sometimes bank accounts as well.

It is not uncommon today to see youths putting countless minutes of their time into these sites in the form of images, post updates, and map updates. It makes them easily trackable and can aid criminals in committing terrible crimes such as stalking, kidnapping, and murdering. Although these crimes are rare, a parallel can be seen in the real world. In short, the real world is policed and safeguarded to protect our youth from harm. Social media has become part and parcel of life. Therefore serious need to safeguard the education need for proper use of the internet and social sites is important.

[Bro. Felicio is a teacher at Nusrat Jahan Ahmadiyya College of Education- Wa, and Director of second year novices]

Social Media: What is it?

Bro. Augustine Kubdaar



*Bro. Augustine Kubdaar
(Superior General of FIC Brothers)*

In addition to conversation, social media are web-based tools for interaction, that allow users to share content such as photos, videos, and links to resources. There is no possibility to fully discuss the concept of social media (part of the new media) in this article, but the most important thing to note here is that while traditional media tools (television, newspaper, radio, books) did not allow its target audience to comment and react, social media or new media is based on user-made content and also supports online commenting and communication which makes it very vivid and dynamic. Social media involves blogs, video sharing sites like YouTube, online podcasts, streaming possibilities. Other examples of social media tools are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, etc. From 2019 statistics, we can see the inevitable role of social media. The study reports that there were 3.48 billion social media users in 2019, with 9% total worldwide growth (288 million) since last year (WeAreSocial.Com). Social Media is gradually taking over as the number one form of communication. Social media, in particular, is equipped with the ability to share information, form opinion, connect individuals and communities and provide tools of active participation.

The new digital environment

The web and social networks have created a new way to communicate and bond. They are “a public square” where the young spend much of their time and meet one another easily. It provides an extraordinary opportunity for dialogue, encounter, and exchange between persons, as well as access to information and knowledge. In many countries, internet and social networks already represent a firmly established forum for reaching and involving young people, not least in pastoral initiatives and activities. Yet to understand this phenomenon, we need to realize that it has its share of limitations and deficiencies. The digital environment is also one of: loneliness, manipulation, exploitation, violence, risk of addiction, a channel for spreading pornography; proliferation of fake news, and many more. The Church and her pastors are not exempt from this phenomenon. Digital spaces blind us to the vulnerability of another human being and prevent us from our own self-reflection (Synod of Bishops, 2018, p.14). For many people, immersion in the virtual world has brought about a kind of “digital migration”, involving withdrawal from their families and their cultural and religious values. It is an entrance into a world of loneliness and of self-invention (Francis, 2019).

The impact of social media use

Social media plays a big role in youth culture today. Surveys show that 90% of teenagers between 13-17 have used social media. 75% percent report having at least one active social media profile, and 51% report visiting a social media site at least daily. Two thirds of teens have their own mobile devices with internet capabilities. On average, teens are online almost nine hours a day, not including time for homework (Common Sense Media, 2021; Pew Research Centre Report).

There are positive aspects of social media, but it has also potential risks. It is important for parents to help their children use these sites responsibly.

Potential benefits of social media include:

- Staying connected to friends
- Meeting new friends with shared interests
- Finding community and support for specific activities
- Sharing artwork or music
- Exploring and expressing themselves

Potential risks of social media include:

- Exposure to harmful or inappropriate content (e.g., sex, drugs, violence, etc.)
- Exposure to dangerous people
- Cyber bullying, a risk factor for depression and suicide
- Over sharing personal information
- Exposure to excessive advertisements
- Privacy concerns including the collection of data about teen users
- Identity theft or being hacked
- Interference with sleep, exercise, homework, or family activities

Adolescents need support and education to develop the skills to manage their social media use. There are many ways parents can use to help their children learn to use social media sites responsibly. Parental supervision should include making sure that filtering technology is used in computers available to children when that is financially and technically feasible, in order to protect them as much as possible from pornography, sexual predators, and other threats. Unsupervised exposure to the Internet should not be allowed. Priests and their faithful, especially the younger generation are encouraged to dialogue freely about what is seen and experienced in cyberspace. The fundamental duty of a Church leader here is to help the faithful become discriminating, responsible Internet users and not addicts of the Internet, neglecting contact with their fellow Christians and with nature itself.

Implications of the use of social media on evangelization of the Gospel values

A proper use of social media can serve as a powerful tool for evangelization and imprint of the gospel and Church values in the lives of adolescents.

- Youth-led media apostolate matters for our youth in the era of media proliferation

because it affords them the opportunity of using the media to create and share their faith stories via the media. Use Youth-led media to encourage the youth to share their stories about their faith and spirituality. In this way, they can influence one another especially those who do not yet know Christ.

- The Clergy and other pastoral agents (e.g., catechists, animators) can also use the forum to preach their sermons and send their messages to the youth.
- Vocation promotion can happen using the social media where the attention of the youth can be found and captured.

Conclusion

We surely have all experienced the side-effects of the digital world, especially of social media with which we can waste quite a lot of time and even forget to live our everyday lives scrolling through feeds of barely known people. But it is important to hear the words of the Gospel that exhort us to be "as cunning as serpents" (Matt 10:16), and not to ignore the tools of today's world, but to use them wisely for good purposes. "Test them all; hold on to what is good," St. Paul reminds us in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 5:21). The potential of the tools of social media are talents that are not only worthwhile but necessary to be explored and utilized for the mission - if we fail to do so, we become like the servant who has buried his treasure (Matt 25:14-30). The need for this has already been pointed out by several popes and theologians. Moreover, the use of modern communication channels is fully in line with our Church's self-definition regarding its mission of evangelization and the service of the common good.

The way forward

Parents have a non-negotiable responsibility of ensuring that their children are brought up in a manner that is acceptable by culture and society. For the clergy and Religious (women and men) if the focus of our call and mission among others is not to save the lives and souls of the youth who are members and future leaders of the church, then I wonder what is important. Parents and



educators should also be extra vigilant in observing adolescents' behaviour. More than that, they should be proactive in cues that might lead the adolescents into deeper risks in life. It will take the efforts of all stakeholders and all who are concerned about the well-being of adolescents, to team-up and fiercely fight to mitigate the negative effects of the use of social media and promote the good values in adolescents' development. Therefore, it is crucial for parents, religious men and women, civil society groups and all other important stakeholders to be curious about social media and become aware of the potential hazards of the use of it.



Reflection on Social Media and Religious Life

Bro. Eustachius Robert Ekowijayanto



The first thing that emerges when we talk about social media is the radical change that has taken place in people's lives, and in the way we think, act, and handle things. Just look around and you will see that society has changed so rapidly in just a few decades. Today it is normal that in every home and religious community, there are computers connected to the Internet, to send and receive information by e-mail or to maintain contacts via Facebook, Messenger, MySpace, Twitter and so on. These are all tools that have significantly changed everyday life and relationships. This revolution has been made possible by the breakthrough of Web 2.0, understood as a medium characterized by user participation.

We must always ask ourselves what we want to achieve, when we use a particular social media platform like Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tik-Tok or Youtube. A common mistake made by many consecrated people is to register profiles in many social networks giving the same type of use to all of them. In the same way, we have to be clear about

the resources we have and who we are going to address. When we talk about social networks, we are referring to a group of people with whom we are in contact through social relationship ranging from family ties to simple friendship. On the other hand, the different types of relationships distinguish the various social groups present on the network. Nothing is impossible in this virtual space, where everyone has the possibility of discovering their personal dimension and expressing themselves with a multiplicity of codes.

Deep down we see that in every act of communication we put our own identity at stake. Many questions arise from this: How do I communicate? Am I clear about my identity? Do I communicate well what I am? How do others see me? Are social networks and the Internet the best means to grow spiritually? We can learn about ecclesial documents in which we are encouraged to use the media to witness the Gospel. We also see that all media insist on one key: DISCERNMENT. The following offer us very specific guidelines and questions to help us

DISCERN the use of social networks.

- When I CONSULT social networks, how much time do I spend on them? Do I know how to distinguish the truth from falsehood? How does it affect my lifestyle, my way of being with others, and of praying? How does it affect my sensitivity, my capacity for silence?
- When I COMMUNICATE through social networks, how does it affect my relationship? How do I interact? Who do I LIKE and who do I ignore? Does my way of relating in person match the way I relate to his image?
- And when we are the ones who CREATE the content, what motivates me to do it? What am I looking for? What part of me do I make known and what not? Am I aware that I am part of a body (Congregation, Church...) when I publish? Does what I share on social networks correspond to my condition as a consecrated person? In this sense, am I an encouragement for the faith and a source of credibility of others in the Church?
- What is the use of the Internet and new technologies in your community? But isn't silence contradictory to the noise of the Internet? Are there negative repercussions on academic or apostolic results related to the use of social networks?

Many questions encourage us to continue reflecting and dialoguing together on these issues and to trust that the Gospel knows how to speak through us...so we return to the question of authenticity, transparency, and having a clear identity. The incorporation of social networks into our lives is a fact. The use of cell phones means that, in one way or another, we are all users of these forms of communication. How does all this affect religious life?

It is a challenging topic and so are the social networks, even more in today's world where we

are immersed; and many times, whether you like it or not, you have to use them for different reasons. This is where discernment comes into play with the big question: What do I share? Why do I want to share? What am I looking for with what I share or do not share? What I share: is it to evangelize or to talk about me? A lot of questions have to be answered...

Many times, we worry about our testimony and example as Christians in our daily lives, but we do not care about our behavior in social networks. The way we present ourselves to the world on the internet is a reflection of our true heart. As followers of Christ, we should demonstrate his teachings at all times, and not only when we think someone is looking at us.

While it is true that networks allow us to shorten the distance and bring people closer, they also create a desert around us and become barriers, so that users can be so absorbed in something that the quality of coexistence with others is no longer face to face, but a simple sharing of the same place.

Although in biblical times there were no social networks, there are verses in the bible that serve as GUIDES for our lives with or without the Internet.

a. Social Networks should not replace human contact

In ancient times, people communicated through handwritten letters, which took months (depending on the distance) to reach their addresses. Although it was the most practical way to send a private message, the author of John's second letter emphasizes that human contact generates joy that cannot be conveyed through words. "Although I have much more to say to you, I do not want to say it by letter. I hope to come and speak to you personally. Then we can rejoice together." (2 John 1:12)

b. We must have Self-Control

It is easy to get carried away by the content of social networks. A CLICK on

one post leads to another, and at the end of the day we have wasted our time looking at things that are really not worth it. The apparent freedom we have on the internet overshadows our conscience and reason; and that's why the Bible warns us to have self-control. "Be careful how you behave. Live like people who think of what they do, and not like fools. Take every opportunity you have to do good, because we are living in very bad times." (Ephesians 5:15-16)

c. Social Networks make you lose focus

Social networks give the illusion that people have a better life than they actually live. Largely, this is an incentive that makes us long for earthly things more than heavenly things; and Jesus Himself warned that this practice is not Christian.

"Do not store up treasures for yourselves here on earth, where moth and rust will damage them, and where thieves come in to steal them. Rather, store up treasure for yourselves in heaven where neither moth nor rust will harm them and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be." (Matthew 6:19-21)

"God has given you new life, for he has raised you up with Christ. Therefore, devote your whole life to doing what pleases God. Think about the things of heaven, where Christ rules at the right hand of God. Do not think about the things of this world." (Colossians 3:2)

d. Posts must have a purpose

Social networks practically allow us to post anything we want. However, this is not an excuse to get caught up in the moment and post comments, images, texts or videos that are not pleasing to God. "In conclusion, whether you eat or drink or do anything else, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31)



e. Social Networks should not be a platform to show our Good Deeds

There are numerous passages in the Bible where it is remarked that God rejects the proud, but accepts the humble. Social networks have become, for some, a way to proclaim the good things they do, but only for the purpose of boasting and gaining fame. However, the Bible warns us that the best reward for doing good is given by God. "Do not do your good deeds in front of people just so that others will see them. If you do so, your Father in heaven will give you no reward." (Matthew 6:1)

f. We should not use Social Networks to criticize

While we are all free to express our opinion, we should not fall into criticism. Just as spoken words have consequences, so do the words we write on social media. The Bible explains that wisdom only comes from God, and that He is the only one who has the ability to judge all people fairly. "Do not presume to be wise, but respect the Lord and avoid evil" (Proverbs 3:7). "Do nothing out of rivalry or pride. Be humble, and let each one regard others as more important than himself." (Philippians 2:3)

g. Social Networks are not Negative, but we must use them wisely

Social networks are very helpful today, but if we want to take positive advantage

of them, we must keep God in mind in all our actions and we must think about whether He would be proud of our behavior on the Internet. The Bible says that we have freedom to do whatever we want, but that freedom comes with responsibility and consequences.

"Some of you say, 'I am free to do whatever I want.' Of course, you are! But not everything that one wants, is suitable; nor does everything strengthen the Christian life." (1 Corinthians 10:23)

h. Social Networks should not take us away from God

Many use the verse in Mark 1:18, "and immediately they left their nets and followed him", to emphasize that we should give the first place in our lives to God, and not to social networks. Although the context of that passage is different, it is an excellent reminder that we should focus more on God's business than anything else.

i. We should not follow people, but God

Today there are famous people who are looking for others to follow them, and although some of them have a good influence and are motivated to help others, there are people who are more focused on getting money and recognition. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul tells them to imitate him in the way they follow the example of Jesus. With this he made it clear that, as Christians, we should only follow, admire and imitate Jesus.

We should learn to use social networks with critical reading of information seeking, and also that it has solid and verifiable foundations, but also that we take advantage of them for updated Christian formation which is necessary to break down walls and build bridges - as Pope Francis says -, an attitude that is only possible if we leave the known behind in order to open ourselves to the new not being afraid of change and a different ecclesial future.



Pope Reflects on Using Social Media for Good



Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Social media are anti-social, anti-human and anti-Christian when they are used to increase differences, fuel suspicion, spread lies and vent prejudice, Pope Francis said in his message for World Communications Day. The Catholic Church and all people of goodwill see great potential in social media when the "net" and "networks" bring people together, help them share useful information and educate one another, he said. But, "social web identity is too often based on opposition to the other, the person outside the group: We define ourselves starting with what divides us rather than with what unites us, giving rise to suspicion and to the venting of every kind of prejudice -- ethnic, sexual, religious and other."

Pope Francis' message for World Communications Day, which most dioceses will celebrate June 2, cites a passage from Ephesians, "We are members one of another," and focuses on moving "from social network communities to the human community." Although the pope was in Panama for World Youth Day, the Vatican kept its tradition of releasing the pope's message on Jan. 24, the feast of St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of journalists. Using social networks to form and promote "community," the pope said, implies encouraging interaction, support and solidarity. Pope Francis' latest foray into social media aims to promote that. During his Angelus address Jan. 20, he launched a new mobile app and online platform where he shares his prayer intentions, and people around the world share theirs. Then everyone can "click to pray" with one another.

Jesuit Father Federic Fornos, international director of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, said that in the first three days, 167,000 people downloaded the *Click to Pray app*, and the "click to pray" button on individual prayer intentions was clicked more than 1 million times Jan. 20-22. The online and on-phones prayer community joins the much larger papal social media accounts on Twitter and Instagram. Begun under Pope Benedict XVI, the @Pontifex Twitter account operates in English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, French, Polish, Latin, German and Arabic. As of Jan. 23, the accounts had a combined total of almost 48 million followers. The Instagram account, Franciscus, opened in March 2016 has more than 5.8 million followers. On both platforms, the pope has a higher than average "engagement rate," which goes beyond how many people see the posts to how many take the time to comment, "like," "retweet" or share.

According to Twipu, a site that tracks Twitter statistics, each of Pope Francis' tweets generates an average of 935 replies, 7,998 retweets and 36,750 likes. In an early December article, the Twiplomacy website listed Pope Francis as No. 4 on the list of the "most followed world leaders on Instagram." He came behind Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indonesian President Joko Widodo and U.S. President Donald Trump. More importantly from the point of view of his Communications Day focus on community, Pope Francis is also in fourth place on world leaders'





Instagram interactions. Each photo or video posted by the Vatican, the site said, garners an average of 198,432 interactions.

On Twitter, Twiplomacy said, @Pontifex is the second most-followed world leader after Trump and comes in third -- behind Modi and Trump -- on the list of "most influential," which is an interaction rate based on the sum of comments, retweets and likes divided by the number of tweets and the average number of followers. "Twiplomacy Study 2018," an annual review of diplomacy through social media conducted by the BCW international media consulting firm, said, "The U.S. president has also changed the tone of discourse on Twitter, frequently insulting his opponents and lampooning foreign leaders." Obviously, Pope Francis' social media accounts do not do that.

In his World Communications Day message, Pope Francis said that forming strong communities, even online, requires people who are "animated by feelings of trust" and are pursuing a common objective. "The community as a network of solidarity requires mutual listening and dialogue based on the responsible use of language." And he cautioned that while social media can promote "encounter," they also can "increase self-isolation," a risk to which

young people are particularly vulnerable. Opposing cyberbullying, isolation and division, he said, Christians are called to use online resources "to invest in relationships and to affirm the interpersonal nature of our humanity...." What is more, Pope Francis said, when online "we Christians are called to manifest that communion which marks our identity as believers. Faith itself, in fact, is a relationship, an encounter, and under the impetus of God's love, we can communicate, welcome and understand the gift of the other and respond to it."

Virtual communities are worthy of the name community and of Christian participation only if they strengthen a personal encounter "that comes alive through the body, heart, eyes, gaze and breath of the other. If a family uses the net to be more connected, to meet at table and look into each other's eyes, then it is a resource," he said. "If a church community coordinates its activity through the network and then celebrates the Eucharist together, then it is a resource." And again, "if the net becomes an opportunity to share stories and experiences of beauty or suffering that are physically distant from us in order to pray together and together seek out the good and to rediscover what unites us, then it is a resource."

On Our Way To Holiness Through Mary's Virtues

Bro. Moses Mgunda



We all have in a way, shape or form, some interests, desires or goals we set to accomplish in our lifetime. In the process of living our lives - whether it be helping others or doing something for oneself or others - we need to ask ourselves: where and how does the Lord fit into our schedules? Is there room for God to interrupt and rearrange our plans? How would we respond if God suddenly chose us for a special assignment? To reflect on these questions, Mary the mother of Jesus and our mother sets

a good example. She is a true reflection of the famous saying "God does not ask about our ability or inability, but our availability".

Reflecting on Mary's life, I am sure she had her own plans, desires and goals to pursue. The appearance of angel Gabriel to Mary, telling her to nurture the son of God was disturbing news. It meant that Mary should abandon her own plans and desires and follow God's Holy will. At the same time Mary was wondering about the possibility of carrying the son of God in her womb since she did not know a man. The interesting thing is that, God's messenger Gabriel is not interested in whether Mary is capable of doing this or not. For with God what matters is our willingness to do what He commands us and where there is will there is always a way. This is why Moses' excuse about his incapability of freeing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt did not matter to God. Mary's response invites and reminds the world, the Church and we brothers FIC, who strive every day to experience and follow her footsteps and have personal touch with our mother, to the same response "I am the Lord's servant, may everything you have said about me come true. (Luke 1:38)

This is one of the greatest virtues of Mary, her availability to do God's will. She mortified herself and her own will by putting God's first and seeking to unite hers with His. We also ought to make sacrifices and offer them up for the greater good of someone else. Accept the small irritations, humiliations and inconveniences of daily life as quietly as



*Bro. Moses Mgunda (Left)
on the occasion
of their first vows,
November 2018*

possible. We cannot do this alone but by investing our lives in prayer. Mary's entire life was one of prayer, in which she constantly placed herself in the presence of the Lord at every moment of her life. Mary perfectly conformed herself to God's will. She saw herself as God saw her, nothing more and nothing less. Mary's virtues are so many, and some of them are her profound humility, her lively faith, continual prayer, Divine purity, heroic patience, Divine wisdom, universal mortification and her obedience. Mary agreed to be the mother of Jesus and in her perfect obedience her soul magnified the Lord. On the cross, Jesus gave His mother to John the apostle to care for. In doing so not only did Jesus give His great love for His mother but gave her to all of us. Therefore we honour Mary in a way that no other human is honoured. We pray for her intercessions and motherly care over us, as well as honour our commitment to God. Mary was the first disciple of Jesus and is our model of discipleship on our way to holiness. Her humble obedience to God is the example of what it means to follow Him. Following the steps of Mary should not be only a routine thing. There are many ways we honour Mary,

from celebrating important moments of her life on Marian feast days throughout the liturgical year, to using sacramentals such as rosary and scapulars, to praying prayers such as the Hail Mary and Hail Holy Queen. All these should help to prepare our souls to receive the grace of God, whom Mary, in all she does, unceasingly magnifies.

These virtues may seem overwhelming at first but there are simple ways to practice them in everyday life with the help of God's grace. A good idea is to pick one of Mary's virtues each week, month, or year and to practice it in everyday situations, for the key to lasting growth is to start in a small way. Remember, the Blessed mother is right there with us every step of the way. Let us not hesitate to ask for her guidance and assistance.

Finally as individual persons and in our gatherings let us not be afraid to grow in love for our Lady. As St. Maximillian Kolbe said "Never be afraid of loving the blessed virgin too much, for you can never love her more than Jesus did"



BECOMING AN FIC BROTHER

We are a community of lay-religious men, who dedicate our lives to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He continues to teach us to be children of God and brothers to all people. Since the foundation of our congregation in 1840 we have had a special interest in the education and formation of young people, especially in poor areas.

We experience this life choice to be both demanding and gratifying. Because of this deep experience we continue to attract young men to our community.

Every candidate brings in his own experiences, gifts and talents. However, it takes some time for a young man to determine if his choice for the Brothers FIC really is his life choice. Likewise, it takes some time for the congregation to determine if a candidate can be accepted as a brother. For it is in the interest of the candidate and the congregation that every individual brother can live a happy and fruitful life.

That is why every candidate must go through a period of formation.

Content of the formation

Every candidate and young brother receives a theoretical and a practical introduction to our life and spirituality. The formation program clarifies how we can grow as human beings, as Christians and as brothers. The program is particularly aimed at the following:

- enriching the development of the candidate as a person;
- reflecting on essential questions concerning their future and their vocation;
- introducing them to the ideals and spirit of the founders of our congregation;
- creating an opportunity to both the congregation and the candidate to make a well-considered decision.

Stages of the formation

1. Postulancy - Whoever feels a vocation to share the life of the brothers FIC can apply for the postulancy by contacting the formation-master or the provincial superior in his area. You find all the addresses at the side of this page. After a number of assessments you go through a preparatory period, called the postulancy. This period normally lasts about one year and gives both the candidate and the congregation the opportunity to get to know each other.
2. Noviciate - After this period, provided the candidate is admitted, the noviciate begins. This marks the start of the life in the congregation and normally takes two years.
3. Temporary profession - After the noviciate the candidate can bind himself by his temporary vows. He does so with the intention of binding himself for life in the future. However, it is a good thing to bind oneself only temporarily in the beginning.

In this period, which normally lasts six years, the young brother can develop his vocation and grow into the daily life of the congregation and its apostolate. The formation continues by integrating the three main dimensions of the life as a brother: to pray, work and live in a community. This period is officially concluded with the final profession.



Interested?

If you are interested in the details of our formation programs, you can contact the following persons:

1. Ghana
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Address: Brothers FIC, P. O. Box 229, Wa (UWR) Ghana
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2. Indonesia
Bro. Ag. Marsanto,
Ant. Teguh Nugraha, and Albert Pratama
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We ask the brothers to use internet and social media with respect to our dignity as humans and to avoid the possible negative impact of these means to our being truly FIC brothers, among others to use internet, television and social media in such a way that enriches community life.



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Memaknai St. Perawan Maria Yang Terkandung T...



Doa Siang: Anugerahkanlah Belas Kasih-Mu bagi Ora...

Doa Katolik – Juadi FIC · 1,8 rb x ditonton · 3 jam yang lalu

