

«The Church in Europe and the Digital Mission»: The Meeting of the Press Officers and Spokespersons of the European Bishops' Conferences in Rome

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From 5 to 7 May 2026, the CCEE organized a meeting of the Spokespersons and Press Officers of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe on the theme "The Church in Europe and Digital Mission", hosted in Rome by the Italian Bishops' Conference (CEI) and the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross.

The opening greetings were delivered by H. E. Msgr. Giuseppe Baturi, Archbishop of Cagliari and General Secretary of the CEI, and by Mr. Vincenzo Corrado, Director of the National Office for Social Communications of the CEI.

In his inaugural address, H. E. Msgr. Gintaras Grušas, Archbishop of Vilnius and President of the CCEE, emphasized that the digital world is not a parallel universe, but a real territory inhabited by real people—with their questions, wounds, hopes, and desires. It is precisely in this authentic mission field that the Church in Europe is called to be present: with truth, humility, and creativity. He also stressed that ecclesial communication must remain centred on the human person, fostering encounter, trust, and communion, rather than polarization and division

The first working session featured a talk by Msgr. Lucio Adrian Ruiz, Secretary of the Holy See's Dicastery for Communication, who recalled that the digital mission does not simply consist in the use of technology or the production of content, but concerns the way in which the Church proclaims the Gospel today. He highlighted how people live, communicate, and seek meaning also in digital spaces, and how the Church is called to inhabit them with authenticity and purpose

The second session was devoted to the theme of artificial intelligence. Mr. Matthew Harvey Sanders, Founder and CEO of Longbeard and creator of Magisterium AI—the leading response engine dedicated to the Catholic Church worldwide—offered a reflection entitled "Bringing Forth Treasures New and Old: The Church's Mission in the Age of AI". In his talk, he emphasised that artificial intelligence represents not only a technological change but also a cultural one, capable of profoundly influencing how people understand reality. He also recalled that AI is not neutral and must be guided by a correct vision of the human person, encouraging Church communicators to take an active role in understanding and integrating these tools into the Church's mission

The third working session took place at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross and was coordinated by Prof. Daniel Arasa, Dean of the Faculty of Institutional Communication. Participants explored some of the main challenges of contemporary communication through a series of contributions dedicated to the digital world and artificial intelligence.

Prof. Giovanni Tridente, Professor of Communication and Artificial Intelligence, in his speech "AI and communication: from fear to alliance", highlighted the importance of approaching artificial intelligence with discernment, recalling that technology must remain at the service of the human person, of truth, and of human relationships.

Prof. Juan Narbona, Professor of Digital Communication, in his discourse "Priests and social media: 10 tips for surviving", underlined how social media can become a space for evangelization and for rebuilding trust in the Church, also offering practical suggestions for an authentic and responsible presence in the digital world.

Dr. Marc Argemi, Expert in corporate communication, strategy and credibility, addressed the issue of "rumours", inviting participants not to consider them merely as a "virus" to be fought, but as "mushrooms" that arise from certain communicative conditions. He also highlighted the importance of building trust, context, and credibility before, during, and after crises.

Finally, Prof. Diego Conteras analysed the communication surrounding the conclave in the digital culture, highlighting the decisive role of media, social networks, and Vatican communication in the transition from Pope Francis to Pope Leo XIV.

During the meeting, participants also had the opportunity to visit the media headquarters of the Italian Bishops' Conference (TV2000, inBlu2000, Avvenire, Agenzia SIR, EdS), and to share several digital "best practices" from their respective Bishops' Conferences, thus fostering the exchange of experiences and common reflections. The program also included daily liturgical celebrations and a visit to the Vatican Museums.

The next meeting of spokespersons and press officers of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe will take place from 5 to 7 May 2027 in Sofia (Bulgary).

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