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Theme of 51st World Day of Social Communications: “Fear not, for I am with you (Is 43,5): Communicating hope and trust in our time”

Today the theme of the 51st World Day of Social Communications was published. It is celebrated in numerous countries, upon recommendation by bishops from around the world (Inter Mirifica, art. 18, *Communio et Progressio* Nos. 100 and 167) on the Sunday before Pentecost. The Pope’s message for World Day of Social Communications is traditionally published on the feast day of St. Francis de Sales, patron of journalists (24 January).

The theme selected for 2017 is “Fear not, for I am with you (Is. 43,5). Communicating hope and trust in our time”, and the Secretariat for Communication has issued a brief document to explain this choice:

“Numbness of conscience or letting desperation get the better of us are two possible “diseases” that our current communication system can cause.

It is possible that our conscience is cauterised, as Pope Francis comments in *Laudato si’*, as a result of the fact that often professionals, opinion leaders and means of communication work in urban areas distant from places of poverty and need, and their physical distance often leads them to ignore the complexity of the dramas faced by men and women.

Desperation is possible, instead, when communication is emphasised and transformed into spectacle, at times becoming a genuine strategy for constructing present dangers and looming fears.

But in the midst of this tumult a whisper is heard: ‘Fear not, for I am with you’. In His Son, God expresses his solidarity with every human situation and revealed that we are not alone, because we have a Father Who does not forget His children. Those who live united with Christ discover that even darkness and death become, for those who so wish, a place for communion with Light and Life. In every event, they try to discover what is happening between God and humanity, to recognise how He too, through the dramatic scenario of this world, is writing the history of salvation. We Christians have ‘good news’ to tell, because we contemplate trustfully the prospect of the Kingdom. The Theme of the next World Day of Social Communications is an invitation to tell the history of the world and the histories of men and women in accordance with the logic of the ‘good news’ that

reminds us that God never ceases to be a Father in any situation or with regard to any man. Let us learn to communicate trust and hope for history”.
