Pope to influencers: “Be agents of communion, capable of breaking down the logic of division”

At the close of Mass for digital missionaries and Catholic influencers, presided over by Cardinal Tagle, Pope Leo challenges everyone to use social media to promote a human culture.

St. Peter’s Basilica was filled with young people coming from across the globe to partake in the Mass as part of the Jubilee for Digital Missionaries and Catholic Influencers. Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Pro-Prefect of the Section for the First Evangelization and New Particular Churches of the Dicastery for Evangelization, presided over the Eucharistic celebration.

In his homily, the Cardinal reflected on the word “influence” and what exactly it means for Catholics and digital missionaries.

What is influence today?

Cardinal Tagle emphasized that the everyone is an influencer, and at the same time, everyone is influenced. “Daily life is a tapestry of crisscrossing influences”, the Cardinal shared, pointing out that we are constantly being influenced by our families, neighborhoods, schools, and other social settings.

When these aspects of life are corrupted, they, in turn, impact who we are and what type of society we create. Moreover, the Pro-Prefect continued, “as the earth and the environment affect us, our activity affects the planet as well.”

He insisted that this Jubilee event is an invitation to “scrutinize the intention that fuels the influence our contemporary world wants to effect.” The change we wish to see in the world is directly connected to how we choose to influence others and our motivations behind it.

Some use false advertising to sway people; others use blackmail or bribery. Still others resort to war, bombings, forced starvation as a means of influencing those around them.

God is our influencer

Cardinal Tagle turned to the day's readings to answer the question: what is influence? Rather than sending us a text or email with an attachment, he pointed out that God sent us His Son.

The Gospel message encourages us to allow Jesus to influence us with His love, through which we can influence others for good. The Cardinal challenged the pilgrims present to "let the love of God in Jesus and the Holy Spirit prevent various poisonous influences from flowing into human hearts and societies."

Pope Leo's call for peace

At the end of the Mass, Pope Leo XIV addressed the young people present in the Basilica in three languages: Spanish, English, and Italian. In his message, he began by once again calling for an end to violence, emphasizing "how much we need peace in these times torn apart by enmity and war".

He reiterated that proclaiming peace is the mission of both the Church and all those who have gathered in Rome for the Jubilee. "Peace needs to be sought, proclaimed, and shared everywhere; both in the tragic places of war and in the empty hearts of those who have lost the meaning of existence and the taste for interiority, for spiritual life."

Therefore, today, more than ever, Pope Leo stressed, digital missionaries are essential to spreading this message to the ends of the earth.

Let our culture remain human

A particular challenge facing those who embark on this mission is to always look for the "suffering flesh of Christ" in every person they meet online. As we find ourselves in a technological society and culture, the Pope challenged the influencers: "It is up to us – to each one of you – to ensure that this culture remains human."

Even though science and technology play an essential role in our daily lives, nothing man-made "should be used to undermine the dignity of others." Being Catholics and influencers and digital missionaries, our mission is to promote "Christian humanism" in our culture.

Go mend the nets of friendship

Throughout history, there have been many moments of change and, the Pope

stressed, the Church has never remained passive. In today's culture so saturated with technology, the challenge is to "work together to develop a way of thinking and a language of our time, that gives voice to love."

More than simply creating content, Pope Leo urged these digital missionaries to create encounters among hearts. This, he continued, leads to the another call—to mend nets. Nets of relationships, of love, of free exchange, where friendships run deep.

The Pope argued we are called to mend the nets that "open space for others more than ourselves, where no 'filter bubble' can silence the voice of the weakest." Through this, we can create a single network of God.

Closing, Pope Leo thanked the young people present for all their work and encouraged them on their path to reaching the ends of the earth through digital means.

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