

Daniella Zsupan-Jerome. *Speak Lord, Your Servant Is Listening: Reflections on Faithful Communication in a Digital Age*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2024, 135 pp., eISBN: 9780814689110, E8911

Delving into the Scripture and reflecting deeply upon it is foundational for Catholic social communicators' mission to authentically share the Good News in a complex and rapidly changing world. These practices serve both spiritual and professional dimensions, ensuring that their communication aligns with the Church's teachings and effectively reaches the hearts of the faithful.

Daniella Zsupan-Jerome's latest work, *Speak Lord, Your Servant Is Listening: Reflections on Faithful Communication in a Digital Age*, is an effective spiritual guide focused on the intersection of the Catholic faith and digital communication. A devotional resource for Catholic communicators, the book is a *lectio divina*-based guide that provides insights and reflective practices for navigating digital culture through the lens of faith, emphasizing listening, intentionality, and a theology of communication rooted in communion with God and others.

Zsupan-Jerome is a distinguished pastoral theologian whose scholarly work explores the dynamic interplay of theology, communication, and digital culture. She is currently an assistant professor of pastoral theology and the director of the Sustained Encuentro Program at Saint John's University School of Theology and Seminary in Collegeville, Minnesota. Since May 2024, she has been on the editorial board of *Religion and Social Communication*.

Zsupan-Jerome's body of work and scholarship emphasizes the transformative role of digital media in ministry and faith formation. Her notable book, *Connected Toward Communion: The Church and Social Communication in the Digital Age*, delves into the Catholic Church's approach to digital communication, highlighting its potential for fostering spiritual growth and connection. In addition to her academic work, she has contributed to

pastoral and devotional resources, offering insights that bridge theology with contemporary media practices.

In the introduction of *Speak Lord, Your Servant Is Listening: Reflections on Faithful Communication in a Digital Age*, the author explores the profound role of communication of faith in our daily lives. Communication, she asserts, is a divine gift, rooted in God's creative Word, and a means of fostering relationships and building communion. She emphasizes that all believers are called to communicate their faith, not just through professional ministry or public platforms but in their everyday interactions.

In an age dominated by digital communication, the introduction highlights the challenges and opportunities of engaging authentically in this space. It calls readers to view communication not merely as a tool for content exchange but as a holy practice rooted in listening, intentionality, and the fruits of the Spirit. This sets the tone for a contemplative journey through Scripture, where readers are invited to reflect on how faith shapes their communication in the modern world.

Communication, a gift meant to bring people into communion with one another and God, is emphasized in the book's various chapters. This theme is evident in stories like Pentecost, where the Spirit enables diverse peoples to understand one another (Chapter 18), and in Adam's joyous declaration upon meeting Eve (Chapter 2). True communication reflects the relational nature of God, who is a Trinity of love and unity. When communication prioritizes self-giving, mutuality, and connection, it mirrors divine communion. Conversely, miscommunication, such as at the Tower of Babel, distorts this purpose, leading to division and alienation (Chapter 4). The reflections urge the readers to reclaim communication as a sacred act that fosters unity, understanding, and shared purpose.

The reflections also explore how words can build up or tear down, citing examples like the serpent's deceitful twisting of God's words to lead Adam and Eve astray (Chapter 3). They encourage readers to use their words intentionally to create, heal, and inspire rather than to harm or divide. Faithful communication also calls for accountability, especially in the digital age, where anonymity and rapid dissemination often lead to thoughtless or

harmful exchanges. As such, we are invited to practice mindful speech rooted in truth and compassion, to counter the noise and hostility prevalent in contemporary discourse.

Listening also emerged as a vital theme of this *lectio divina*, both as a posture toward God and as a foundation for authentic human relationships. Stories like those of Samuel’s call (Chapter 8) and Elijah’s encounter with God in a gentle whisper (Chapter 9) illustrate the transformative power of listening with the “ear of the heart” (p.16). Amid the distractions of modern life, particularly with the overwhelming noise of digital spaces, the readers are counselled to practice contemplative listening. To listen well is to honor others’ dignity and to be fully present. This attentiveness enriches personal relationships and deepens one’s relationship with God, who speaks in silence and stillness.

Silence as a sacred space is also a theme evident in the various reflections in this book. Silence is portrayed not as an absence but as a profound presence, a space where divine communication unfolds. In Revelation, the silence in heaven before God’s judgment reflects awe and reverence (Chapter 20). Similarly, the readers are advised to incorporate silence into modern communication practices, allowing space for reflection and discernment. In a culture that values speed and immediacy, individuals are urged to practice silence—to pause and engage with depth and intentionality.

Finally, the Holy Spirit is portrayed as the animating force behind faithful communication (Chapters 10, 18, 19). This theme calls on the readers to discern the Spirit’s guidance in their words and actions, ensuring that their communication aligns with God’s will and reflects divine love. As such, we are to approach digital communication with a person-centered mindset, emphasizing the humanity behind the screens. By embodying the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness—believers can transform digital spaces into avenues for authentic connection and evangelization.

The Epilogue reflects on Mary, the Mother of God, as a model for faithful communication. Mary’s “yes” to God marks her as the first influencer, embracing the Divine Word with humility and openness. Through her example, she teaches the theology and

practice of communication by receiving, nurturing, and sharing the Word. Her Magnificat and silent attentiveness illustrate a balance of conviction and humility, guiding believers to prioritize their relationship with God over self-promotion.

Mary's role extends into the digital age, where her traits of listening and service provide a blueprint for engaging faithfully in communication. Her relationship with the Word and Spirit inspires believers to say "yes" to God in their own lives, fostering encounters and connections that mirror divine love. The epilogue calls for prayerful reflection, asking Mary to intercede for us as we strive to become faithful communicators in both word and action.

Social communicators serve as bridges between the Church and society. Regular Bible reading, reflections, and *lectio divina* such as those in this book will help anchor their work in the truths of the faith, fostering a deeper personal relationship with God. This spiritual grounding will, in turn, help them approach their mission with authenticity and integrity, ensuring their message reflects Gospel values rather than personal agendas or secular pressures.

Bible reading and reflection are indispensable practices for Catholic social communicators. They serve as a compass, guiding their ethical, creative, and spiritual efforts while ensuring their work remains rooted in the Gospel. By immersing themselves in Scripture, communicators not only enrich their own faith but also uphold the dignity of their audience and ensure their content aligns with the Church's mission of communion.

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