

Faithful and Creative Disciples in a Wounded World: A Communicative Paradigm for Mission

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Introduction: Reclaiming Mission through Communication

In the shifting contours of the 21st-century world—marked by digital transformation, ecological crisis, social fragmentation, and renewed spiritual longing—the Catholic Church stands at a communicative and missionary crossroads. The Jubilee Year 2025, framed by the theme “*Pilgrims of Hope*,” offers a unique ecclesial moment—a *kairos*—to reflect on how the Church embodies and transmits its mission in wounded contexts. At the heart of this reflection is a pivotal insight: communication is not auxiliary to mission, but intrinsic to it. It is through communication—understood not merely as information transfer but as relational, dialogical, and symbolic engagement—that the Church becomes a credible witness to the Gospel.

This essay examines the communicative dimensions of the Church’s missionary identity within the theological and pastoral horizon of Jubilee 2025. It argues that the Church must transition from monological proclamation to synodal dialogue; from doctrinal assertion to incarnational witness; and from hierarchical control to co-responsible participation. Drawing inspiration from the charism and praxis of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), the work situates missionary communication within a spirituality of encounter—one that is deeply rooted in the mystery of the Word made flesh. In this emerging model, the Church is envisioned as a *pilgrim communicator*—listening attentively, discerning faithfully, and proclaiming courageously in the language of diverse cultures, the wounds of the world, and the silence of the Spirit.

Anchored in the theological insights of recent pontificates—particularly those of Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis—the paper outlines a communicative ecclesiology that is prophetic, pastoral, and intercultural. It contends that to be truly missionary, the Church must be transformed into a community of presence and dialogue: one that speaks hope in fractured contexts, embodies Eucharistic solidarity, and heals through relational proximity. The Jubilee is thus interpreted not as a liturgical celebration alone, but as a call to reimagine the Church’s communicative vocation considering synodality, mysticism, and social justice.

Recognizing this urgent call, the following sections will explore how the Church—drawing particularly on the missionary spirituality and communicative praxis of the SVD—can embody a more relational, dialogical, and contextually grounded approach to mission. Anchored in theological reflection and inspired by the pastoral orientations of the 19th SVD General Chapter, this essay will examine key dimensions of communicative discipleship in a wounded world. These include cultivating a spirituality of woundedness, embracing prophetic dialogue, and engaging creatively with diverse cultures, faith traditions, and digital spaces. By integrating insights from contemporary missiology, ecclesiology, and intercultural communication theory, the discussion will outline concrete pathways through which the Church can witness to the light of the Gospel with credibility, compassion, and hope in our fractured global context.

In light of this ecclesial and missiological horizon, it becomes essential to consider how the Church’s communicative identity is reframed when viewed through the lens of pilgrimage. As both metaphor and lived ecclesial experience, pilgrimage offers a compelling paradigm for understanding mission in a wounded world. It evokes movement, vulnerability, encounter, and ongoing conversion—qualities that lie at the heart of synodality and authentic missionary communication. The following section will therefore explore how pilgrimage, as a theological and pastoral motif, offers the Church a renewed framework for embracing synodal processes and fostering a logic of encounter. Within this paradigm, communication becomes not merely a functional strategy but an embodiment of the Church’s vocational journey toward deeper communion with God, humanity, and creation. The following section will therefore explore how pilgrimage, as a theological and pastoral motif, offers the Church a renewed framework for embracing synodal processes and fostering a logic of encounter. Within this paradigm, communication becomes not merely a functional strategy but an embodiment of the Church’s vocational journey toward deeper communion with God, humanity, and creation.

Pilgrimage as a Paradigm: Synodality and the Logic of Encounter

The image of pilgrimage—central to the Jubilee—invites the Church to embrace movement, mutuality, and shared vulnerability. To be a pilgrim is to embark on a journey enriched by communion, not traveled alone but shared with others. This dynamic finds deep resonance in Pope Francis' call for a synodal Church—a Church that listens, walks, and discerns together.¹

Such ecclesiology requires a reorientation of the Church's communicative stance: from hierarchical proclamation to dialogical encounter, from monologue to mutual discernment. As Paul VI in *Gaudium et Spes* affirms, the Church must engage the world “by entering into dialogue with it about all that concerns humanity.”²

This communicative pilgrimage is also intercultural. Especially in the SVD's missionary practice, it entails openness to languages, customs, and narratives beyond the familiar. To walk together across cultural boundaries is not to erase difference, but to sanctify it as a site of grace. In such spaces, communication becomes an act of justice, hospitality, and theological humility.

Moreover, pilgrimage affirms that Christian discipleship is a process, not a destination. It rejects static ecclesial models in favor of dynamic responsiveness to the Spirit's movement through history and context. As Pope Francis emphasizes in *Evangelii Gaudium*, a Church that goes forth must be “capable of being constantly self-renewed.”³ Pilgrimage fosters this renewal by compelling the Church to engage with the joys and wounds of the world through practices of listening, lament, and accompaniment. The act of walking with others—especially the excluded, disillusioned, or spiritually searching—becomes a catechetical gesture that precedes words and doctrines.

This paradigm also challenges the Church to develop new forms of participatory communication. Pilgrimage, unlike institutional programs, cannot be scripted; it unfolds through trust, discernment, and mutual presence. In this

¹ Pope Francis, “Address of His Holiness on the Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops,” October 17, 2015, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html.

² Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, December 7, 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

³ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*: Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, 2013, https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.pdf.

light, synodality is not a bureaucratic strategy but a spiritual posture. The preparatory document for the Synod on Synodality notes that the Church is called “to learn how to walk together and to discern the path that the Spirit invites us to take.”⁴ This discernment unfolds not only in councils or official documents but also within local communities—through storytelling, moments of silence, honest conversations, diverse perspectives, and healing dialogue.

Finally, pilgrimage renews the Church’s symbolic and sacramental imagination. As a metaphor for ecclesial life, it reminds the Church that authority must be exercised in motion, service, and relational transparency. Walking together involves shared risk and mutual conversion. The Jubilee call to become “Pilgrims of Hope” is thus not a sentimental image—it is a prophetic invitation to embody communication as communion. In the footsteps of Christ on the road to Emmaus, the Church must become a companioning presence, where hearts burn not because of institutional prestige, but because the Word is shared in solidarity and bread is broken in trust (Luke 24:13–35).

Proclaiming Hope: Witness as Language

In an age of disillusionment and despair, Christian communication must be rooted in hope—not as optimism, but as eschatological defiance against cynicism. As John Paul II observed in *Redemptor Hominis*, the Church must become “expert in humanity,” offering responses that speak not only to doctrines but to desires, fears, and longings.⁵ Hope must be embodied. The Church speaks most credibly when her communication flows from lived witness rather than theoretical assertion. Pope Paul VI echoes this: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers.”⁶ The missionary disciple, then, is not a transmitter of dogma but a narrator of grace, whose life speaks healing in the language of accompaniment, mercy, and resilience.

In digital cultures where noise overwhelms meaning, communicators must be both spiritually grounded and creatively expressive—narrating the Gospel not only in catechetical terms but through symbolic gestures, artistic media, and presence that consoles. Hope is not shouted—it is shared.

⁴ Synod of Bishops, *Preparatory Document for the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality: For a Synodal Church—Communion, Participation, Mission*, 2021, <https://www.synod.va/en/news/the-preparatory-document.html>.

⁵ Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*: Encyclical Letter, 1979, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-

⁶ Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World, December 8, 1975, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html.

Witness, in this sense, becomes the Church's most authentic language. As Francis emphasizes in *Evangelii Gaudium*, true proclamation arises from a "missionary joy" that goes beyond obligation—it draws others into encounter with the living Christ.⁷ This joy is not naïve, but resilient: it remains even in wounded contexts and sustains communities through crisis. The Church's hope, therefore, is not persuasive because it solves suffering, but because it accompanies it faithfully.

Art, ritual, and storytelling are vital channels for this hopeful witness. From the Stations of the Cross to digital testimonials, symbolic language allows the Church to communicate the Gospel in forms that penetrate both intellect and imagination. As Pope Francis argues in *Laudato Si'*, care for creation is not merely ethical—it is poetic; the Church's hope for the world must be expressed in ways that restore beauty, harmony, and communion with the Earth.⁸ Hope becomes a performative language: it lives in aesthetics, gestures, and silence.

Moreover, prophetic hope involves confronting systems of death with truth-telling love. Witness is not merely pastoral—it is political. The Church proclaims hope by resisting racism, exclusion, ecological degradation, and exploitation. It lifts up the stories of those silenced by systemic sin and, in doing so, reveals the Kingdom breaking into history. As Francis declares in *Fratelli Tutti*, "hope speaks of something deeply rooted in the human heart" that motivates active love and justice.⁹

Finally, this communicative hope must be communal. Testimony becomes credible when shared across cultures, generations, and vocations. The pilgrim Church walks together in hope—not only proclaiming it, but enacting it through synodal processes, intercultural dialogue, and Eucharistic solidarity. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, "Hope is always a journey," one that binds the Church to the world in mutual transformation.¹⁰ This journey requires disciples who communicate not just with words, but with their whole lives.

⁷ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*.

⁸ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*: Encyclical Letter on Care for Our Common Home, 2015, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

⁹ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*: Encyclical Letter on Fraternity and Social Friendship, 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html.

¹⁰ Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi: Encyclical Letter on Christian Hope*, 2007, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi.html.

Mysticism and Mission: The Inner Grammar of Communication

A truly missionary Church must be contemplative. Without mysticism, communication devolves into strategy. Without mission, mysticism collapses into withdrawal. The fusion of these two realities generates a “grammar of encounter” that undergirds all authentic communication. Pope Francis consistently reminds us that the heart of evangelization lies in silence, prayer, and discernment.¹¹ Mystical experience opens communicators to speak not from anxiety or ideology, but from communion with Christ. As seen in the lives of figures like St. Óscar Romero and St. Teresa of Calcutta, effective proclamation flows from contemplative attentiveness. In this light, communication becomes sacramental—it renders visible the invisible. In an age addicted to spectacle, the Church must reclaim the countercultural language of stillness, vulnerability, and listening. The Jubilee calls the Church both to proclaim and to behold—to communicate God through speech as well as through silence.

Mysticism, in this context, does not refer to extraordinary visions or esoteric practices, but to a posture of radical attentiveness to God’s presence in history and human experience. As Pope Francis observes, “without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the Word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless.”¹² The mystic is not someone who escapes the world but one who sees the world more deeply. This deep seeing—this contemplative gaze—fosters a communication that listens before speaking and discerns before acting. In missionary contexts, this gaze allows one to see Christ in the faces of the poor, the migrants, the wounded, and the overlooked.

Contemplation also shapes the tone and method of Christian communication. It tempers urgency with humility and replaces control with surrender. In the 2023 *Message for World Communications Day*, Pope Francis calls for communicators who “speak with the heart,” insisting that authentic communication arises from a “merciful gaze that heals.”¹³ The mystic-communicator does not aim to dominate the narrative but to co-suffer, to co-interpret, and to co-witness. In this view, communication becomes a liturgical act—an

¹¹ Pope Francis, General Audience, Saint Peter’s Square, September 28, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2022/documents/20220928-udienza-generale.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

¹² Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*.

¹³ Pope Francis, *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 57th World Day of Social Communications*, January 24, 2023, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/20230124-messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html>.

extension of the Eucharistic mystery in which we offer not just words, but ourselves.

Moreover, mysticism enables a missionary Church to navigate the noise and fragmentation of digital culture. The digital world often thrives on immediacy, outrage, and superficiality. By contrast, mystical communication insists on depth, discernment, and presence. As theologian Karl Rahner famously asserted, “the Christian of the future will be a mystic or will not exist at all.”¹⁴ In a time when algorithms shape attention and truth is contested, mystically grounded communicators can offer a stabilizing and soul-restoring presence that points beyond distraction to the eternal.

The tradition of the SVD is particularly instructive in this regard. Rooted in the spirituality of St. Arnold Janssen, the SVD integrates mission and contemplation through practices like *Lectio Divina*, adoration, and intercultural prayer. These disciplines cultivate a mysticism that is both communal and missional. For SVD missionaries, communication is not merely a professional task but a spiritual vocation—a call to incarnate the Word through presence, humility, and listening across cultures. It is this mystically charged communication that enables the Church to speak prophetically without becoming ideological, to proclaim truth without violence, and to bear witness to the Gospel in ways that heal rather than divide.

Finally, the Jubilee Year 2025 offers a *kairos* moment for renewing the Church’s contemplative identity. It challenges ecclesial institutions to prioritize spiritual formation over managerial efficiency, to create spaces for silence in an overstimulated world, and to recover the slow, sacramental pace of grace. As the Church seeks to become a “Pilgrim of Hope,” it must first become a contemplative communicator—one who transmits not only knowledge but presence, not only doctrine but mystery. In this sense, mysticism is not optional for the missionary Church; it is its deepest grammar.

Communicating in a Wounded World: Reading the Signs of the Times

The Church’s mission is shaped by theological principles as well as lived realities. Today’s communicative challenges are deeply tied to the *signa temporum* (Signs of the Times)—secularization, inequality, environmental collapse, pluralism, and displacement.

¹⁴ Patricia Carroll, “Moving Mysticism to the Centre: Karl Rahner (1904–1984),” *The Way* 43, no. 4 (October 2004): 41–52.

Secularism challenges the Church to reframe proclamation as invitation, not imposition. Narrative theology, testimonial preaching, and creative storytelling can offer reentry points into a culture disenchanted with institutional religion. As Benedict XVI noted, faith today must be proposed through beauty and meaning rather than imposed through authority.¹⁵ The Church, therefore, must become a storyteller—offering glimpses of transcendence through ordinary witness and deeply human language.

Global inequality reveals that communication is also a justice issue. The voices of the poor are often silenced, while dominant narratives reinforce power structures. Missionary communication must therefore become an act of advocacy—listening to, amplifying, and learning from the margins. Pope Paul VI urged that the Church be “expert in humanity,” which includes a capacity to speak with and not merely about the suffering.¹⁶ Media ministries and pastoral formation must prioritize participatory communication, enabling the marginalized to become agents of their own narratives.

Ecological devastation is both a scientific and narrative crisis. In *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis reframes creation care as a theological imperative—insisting that environmental degradation is a symptom of spiritual disorder.¹⁷ Therefore, the Church should communicate ecology both through institutional statements and through liturgical gestures, artistic expression, and ecological catechesis. As the Earth “groans” (Rom. 8:22), the Church must learn to speak in lament and hope, offering a renewed language of kinship and covenant with all creation.

Migration, finally, is a communicative frontier. “Migrants are not a burden; they are a gift,” says Pope Francis, affirming that the displaced possess both dignity and theological insight.¹⁸ The Church must shift from treating migrants as recipients of charity to protagonists of communal renewal. Testimonial storytelling, cross-cultural liturgies, and digital platforms can help rehumanize public discourse, challenging xenophobic narratives with Gospel-rooted solidarity. In doing so, ecclesial communication becomes a form of restorative justice.

¹⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, “Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections,” Lecture at the University of Regensburg, September 12, 2006, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html.

¹⁶ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

¹⁷ Francis, *Laudato Si’*.

¹⁸ Pope Francis, *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 108th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2022*, September 25, 2022, accessed June 10, 2025, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/20220509-world-migrants-day-2022.html>.

Pluralism, too, redefines the Church's communicative vocation. In an age of cultural fragmentation and religious diversity, dialogue becomes not optional but constitutive of mission. Pope Francis's vision of a "culture of encounter" requires communicators to listen across differences and speak in ways that foster mutual transformation.¹⁹ Interreligious dialogue, arts-based ministry, and intercultural competence are now essential to missionary formation. The Church's witness is no longer just doctrinal—it is dialogical, performative, and relational, shaped by the grammar of shared humanity and sacred difference. These wounded contexts call for a renewed communicative ethic, one rooted in contemplation, shaped by proximity, and enacted through creative fidelity. The credibility of the Church's message in the 21st century depends not only on what she proclaims but on how, where, and with whom she communicates.

A Synodal Future: Toward Co-Responsible Communication

The future of the Church's mission is not individualistic or hierarchical—it is collaborative and co-responsible. Synodality, in this sense, is a communicative spirituality. Every baptized person is a communicator of the Gospel, and every voice is needed to discern the Spirit's movement. This vision echoes Pope Francis's articulation of a "synodal Church," one that listens before it teaches and walks together in mutual discernment.²⁰ This demands a new formation paradigm. Missionaries must be equipped not only in theology, but in intercultural competence, trauma-informed pastoral care, and nonviolent communication. Women, laity, and youth are to be empowered as essential protagonists, playing active and indispensable roles in shaping ecclesial life and mission. As Francis has emphasized, "lay people are, put simply, the vast majority of the people of God," and their voices must shape ecclesial mission.²¹

Digital tools, if used with discernment, can support synodal participation. But the real transformation lies in relational presence and Eucharistic humility. As the Church journeys through the Jubilee, she is called to embody her own message—becoming a space of dialogue, accompaniment, and prophetic

¹⁹ Pope Francis, Address of His Holiness on the Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops, October 17, 2015, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html.

²⁰ Francis, *Address of His Holiness*.

²¹ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*.

imagination. Synodality, then, is not simply a structure; it is a spiritual disposition of attentiveness and inclusion.

The synodal path also challenges traditional notions of ecclesial authority. It replaces the image of the Church as a monologue with that of a “polyphony of voices,” in which diverse experiences—particularly those at the margins—are not only heard but help to shape the Church’s mission.²² In this model, bishops are not merely decision-makers but facilitators of dialogue and discernment.

Effective co-responsibility also requires ecclesial transparency. A synodal Church is a listening Church, but also one willing to examine its failures and communicate with integrity. Pope Francis has urged Church leaders to resist the temptation of “clericalism,” which distorts the Church’s identity by excluding the People of God from discernment processes.²³ Synodality, by contrast, invites a culture of humility, accountability, and mutual learning.

A co-responsible Church also reimagines the liturgy and sacraments as communicative events. The Eucharist, for example, becomes more than ritual; it becomes a site of shared memory, embodied proclamation, and relational communion. Here, communication is not about efficiency or persuasion—it is about participation in the mystery of grace. In such a space, every act of listening, forgiving, or accompanying becomes sacramental.

Finally, this vision of communication challenges the Church to invest in formation programs that train facilitators, not just teachers; listeners, not just speakers. As synodal processes expand globally, formation must include skills in mediation, group discernment, digital dialogue, and narrative leadership. The missionary disciple is thus not just a catechist or preacher—but a weaver of communion.

Communicating in a Wounded World: Witnessing to the Light through Faithful and Creative Discipleship

The contemporary global landscape presents the Church—and in particular the Society of the Divine Word (SVD)—with an array of multifaceted and interrelated crises. Rising social and economic inequalities, environmental degradation, forced migration, escalating cultural polarizations, and a

²² Pope Francis, Address at the Opening of the Works of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission,” Paul VI Audience Hall, October 4, 2023, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2023/october/documents/20231004-apertura-sinodo.html>.

²³ Francis, *Address of His Holiness*.

deepening sense of spiritual fragmentation together constitute what theologians and missiologists increasingly identify as a *signs of the times* requiring urgent and theologically reflective missionary engagement.²⁴ These are not merely socio-political issues; they are existential wounds—both anthropological and ecological—that pierce the very fabric of human and cosmic communion. As such, they demand a missionary response that is not only contextually relevant but also theologically grounded, spiritually mature, and communicatively transformative.

The 19th General Chapter of the SVD emerges as a significant ecclesial and missiological milestone in this regard. Rooted in the theological motif "*Embracing a Wounded World and Our Own Woundedness*," the Chapter foregrounds the Church's and the Congregation's vocational imperative to engage with the suffering of the world from a position of vulnerability and solidarity. It calls for "prophetic dialogue and transformative communication," inviting missionaries to embody a praxis-oriented spirituality that listens deeply to the "groaning of creation" and the cries of marginalized humanity.²⁵ The Chapter recognizes that effective mission in this epochal moment must move beyond didactic proclamation toward a dialogical and participatory communication model shaped by empathy, intercultural awareness, and pastoral sensitivity.

This vision aligns closely with Pope Francis's magisterial articulation of a "*culture of encounter*," as expressed in *Evangelii Gaudium* and further developed in *Fratelli Tutti*. Francis consistently urges the Church to resist modes of communication that are triumphalist, abstract, or exclusionary, and instead embrace a dialogical disposition that prioritizes mutual listening, bridge-building, and accompaniment.²⁶ The SVD Chapter document reflects this ecclesiological sensibility by emphasizing the urgent need for communicative practices that foster healing rather than perpetuate harm, promote inclusion rather than deepen marginalization, and cultivate authentic communion rather than reinforce patterns of alienation and exclusion.

The SVD's Jubilee theme, "*Witnessing to the Light: From Everywhere for Everyone*," provides a rich theological hermeneutic through which the woundedness of the world may be engaged missiologically. This theme reflects the universal catholicity of the Church's mission while emphasizing the intercultural and transnational character of the SVD charism. As missionaries

²⁴ Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004).

²⁵ Society of the Divine Word (SVD), *Documents of the 19th General Chapter SVD 2024* (Rome: SVD Publications Generalate, 2024).

²⁶ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium & Fratelli Tutti*.

dispersed across diverse cultural and geopolitical contexts—Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Oceania—SVD members are summoned to bear witness to the light of Christ, not from positions of power or privilege, but from shared human vulnerability and ecclesial solidarity.

The Chapter document, *"Our Light Must Shine Before Others: Faithful and Creative Disciples in a Wounded World,"* offers a profound pastoral, theological, and missiological framework for such witness. It invokes the biblical imagery of light not as a symbol of doctrinal superiority but as a metaphor for transformative presence, relational fidelity, and incarnational solidarity. The document insists that SVD missionaries must cultivate the disposition of *wounded healers*—those who, drawing from their own experiences of brokenness and grace, enter into “prophetic dialogue” and facilitate “transformative communication” that speaks hope, justice, and healing into contexts of systemic violence, environmental devastation, and socio-spiritual alienation.²⁷

Communication within this theological paradigm is reconceptualized not as a unidirectional transmission of catechetical content but as a deeply relational, dialogical, and sacramental praxis. Drawing on Robert Schreiter’s theology of reconciliation and intercultural communication, the SVD approach embraces communication as an act of hospitality, presence, and participatory engagement.²⁸ It calls for the co-creation of spaces where marginalized voices are amplified, silenced stories are heard, and collective healing becomes possible.

This creative and faithful discipleship necessitates the adoption of a variety of communicative modalities that are contextually grounded and theologically intentional:

- **Narrative theology and storytelling methodologies** with marginalized communities that make visible their pain, resilience, and hope. Such storytelling is not a peripheral activity but a *locus theologicus* where God’s presence in history is discerned and celebrated.
- **Ecological communication and eco-theology** that integrate the insights of *Laudato Si’* into local eco-pastoral initiatives, thus framing environmental activism as a form of sacramental solidarity with creation.
- **Digital and social media ministries** that utilize contemporary communication technologies not merely for dissemination but as platforms for community-building, intercultural dialogue, and prophetic advocacy for justice and peace.

²⁷ SVD, *Documents of the 19th General Chapter*.

²⁸ Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997).

- **Interreligious and intercultural dialogue** that affirms the sacred narratives of non-Christian traditions while witnessing to the transformative power of the Gospel. Such dialogue is itself a form of *Missio Dei*, participating in God's ongoing action in the world.

The Jubilee's missiological call to *witness to the light* further impels the SVD to transcend conventional borders—whether geographical, cultural, social, or digital—and carry the Gospel into spaces of darkness where hope has been eclipsed. Yet this missional light must never be coercive or triumphalist. Rather, it must emerge from a kenotic, self-emptying love that reflects the incarnational logic of the Word made flesh (Jn 1:14), manifesting itself through empathetic listening, prophetic truth-telling, and participatory dialogue.

Operationalizing this vision demands strategic and theological intentionality from SVD communication ministries:

- **Trauma-informed pastoral care formation:** Missionaries must be equipped to offer psychosocial and spiritual care in post-conflict settings, refugee camps, and disaster-stricken communities.
- **Intercultural competence and sensitivity training:** Content and modes of communication must reflect the pluriform beauty of human cultures while avoiding ethnocentrism or theological reductionism.²⁹
- **Faith community formation as sites of Eucharistic solidarity and prophetic praxis:** These communities should function as embodied signs of hope, where liturgy and justice meet, and where the communication of faith is intrinsically tied to social transformation.

In this integrated theological and missiological horizon, the SVD's thematic emphases—"*Witnessing to the Light: From Everywhere for Everyone*" and "*Faithful and Creative Discipleship in a Wounded World*"—converge into a unified, Spirit-led ecclesial posture. It is a call to become a Church that listens deeply, accompanies courageously, and proclaims hope credibly—through life, word, and sacramental presence. By embodying the light of Christ in the world's darkest and most wounded places, the SVD continues to bear witness to God's irrevocable commitment to healing, justice, and reconciliation.

²⁹ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).

Conclusion: Communicating in a Wounded World— Becoming What We Proclaim

To be faithful and creative disciples in a wounded world requires the Church to embrace a profound reorientation in how she understands, embodies, and practices communication. The call to “Communicating in a Wounded World: Witnessing to the Light through Faithful and Creative Discipleship” is not simply a thematic directive; it is an ecclesial conversion, inviting the Church in general and SVD members in particular to move from proclamation rooted in power and certainty to witness grounded in vulnerability, humility, and relational presence. Jubilee 2025 marks not merely a liturgical event but a *kairos*—a decisive time of grace that summons the entire People of God to incarnate the very Gospel they proclaim: to become pilgrims rather than wielders of power, listeners rather than mere teachers, and reconcilers rather than distant institutional figures.

In the face of mounting global crises—ecological devastation, forced migration, systemic injustice, cultural polarization, and spiritual disenchantment—the Church stands at a critical missiological crossroads. These are not peripheral challenges but deeply theological signs of the times. They represent anthropological and ecological wounds that rupture the communion between God, humanity, and creation. In this context, communication cannot remain an ancillary activity of mission. It must emerge as a core expression of the Church’s identity—missionally transformative, contextually sensitive, spiritually grounded, and prophetically bold.

The 19th General Chapter of the SVD articulates this vision with clarity and pastoral urgency. Rooted in the theme “Embracing a Wounded World and Our Own Woundedness,” the Chapter calls SVD missionaries to cultivate a spirituality of woundedness. Here, mission flows not from triumphalism but from shared vulnerability and solidarity with the brokenness of the world. Effective communication, according to this vision, begins with deep listening—to the “groaning of creation,” to the lament of marginalized peoples, and to the Spirit’s movement within contexts of violence, displacement, and exclusion.

This ecclesiological and pastoral vision finds resonance in Pope Francis’s theology of encounter. In *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Fratelli Tutti*, the Pope challenges the Church to dismantle communicative structures that are abstract, hierarchical, or exclusionary, and instead foster a dialogical, participatory, and relational mode of evangelization. The Church is called to listen before speaking, to accompany before instructing, and to build bridges before drawing boundaries.

To embody this vision, communication within the SVD must take on diverse and theologically intentional forms. Storytelling with marginalized communities must be embraced as a *locus theologicus*—a space where God’s salvific action in history becomes visible through human narratives of pain and hope. Ecological communication, inspired by *Laudato Si’*, must reframe environmental advocacy as sacramental solidarity with creation. Digital and social media platforms must become spaces not of mere information dissemination but of authentic intercultural dialogue and prophetic advocacy for justice and peace. Interreligious dialogue must become not simply an intellectual exercise but an embodied recognition of God’s presence within the sacred stories of others, participating in the ongoing *missio Dei* that transcends religious boundaries.

The call to witness to the light requires SVD missionaries to cross not only geographical borders but also cultural, social, ecclesial, and digital frontiers. Yet this light-bearing mission must remain grounded in kenosis—a self-emptying love that reflects the incarnational logic of the Word made flesh (John 1:14). The proclamation of the Gospel must flow from empathetic listening, prophetic truth-telling, and dialogical engagement that upholds human dignity and fosters hope in even the most broken contexts.

Such a paradigm shift cannot remain theoretical. It necessitates intentional and ongoing formation. Trauma-informed pastoral care must become a priority, equipping missionaries to accompany communities living in the aftermath of violence, migration, or ecological catastrophe. Intercultural competence and theological sensitivity must shape the content and delivery of all communication, ensuring that the Church’s witness reflects the diverse beauty of human cultures and avoids all forms of ethnocentrism or reductionism. Furthermore, local faith communities must be nurtured as sites where Eucharistic solidarity and prophetic praxis converge, becoming living sacraments of hope, justice, and reconciliation.

In this integrated theological and missiological horizon, the SVD’s dual themes—*“Witnessing to the Light: From Everywhere for Everyone”* and *“Faithful and Creative Discipleship in a Wounded World”*—converge into a singular Spirit-led ecclesial posture. The Church is invited to become not merely a speaker of the Word but a living embodiment of the Word, communicating through gestures of compassion, ecological witness, intercultural dialogue, trauma healing, and narrative justice.

In sum, to communicate in this wounded world is not merely to inform but to incarnate. To evangelize is not merely to proclaim but to become a living sign of the Gospel—a Church that listens deeply, accompanies courageously, and proclaims hope credibly through life, word, and sacramental presence. This is the true meaning of Jubilee: a radical call to communion, expressed not through

institutional slogans but through lived, credible, Eucharistic presence—a Church offering not dominance but dialogue, not ideology but intimacy, not spectacle but the quiet, faithful witness of love.