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**First Place**

## **How should the Catholic Church evangelize in the digital age?**

The digital age has brought significant changes in how we live, work, and interact with the world. Technology offers incredible opportunities to connect with others, access and share information quickly, and participate in conversations with others. It can also strengthen the spiritual communications of the Church - particularly with younger generations.

In the digital age, it's important for the Catholic Church to grow in real-time and respond to trends and needs of society. The Church must be prepared to change as the digital landscape develops. In 2020, the Church made a significant shift when the government restricted indoor gatherings including church services (and beyond). As a result, many parishes began streaming Sunday mass online. However, there are several other ways the Catholic Church can further evangelize in the digital age.

One way the Church can expand its reach is by using social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. These sites have features such as reels, posts, likes, comments, shares and hashtags. By utilizing these tools the Catholic Church, along with its parishioners, are able to share with others their faith in God and spread the Good News through biblical verses and empowering religious blessings. Additionally, the use of hashtags categorizes these posts and helps them appear more easily in the search function allowing to further spread the Word of God. Instagram and Facebook also have an ad feature, which could help the Church promote events or special services as well as enhance and grow the Church community. Lastly, both platforms offer live streaming which would allow users to join Sunday mass virtually. This option reaches both older and younger generations based on each platform's target audience.

Another platform the Catholic Church would benefit from using is "X" (formally Twitter). This site offers features including videos, pictures, likes, comments, shares, and re-tweeting. Posts are generally brief "sound bites" of information that grab the attention of users without overwhelming them with too much text or details. Many tweets include graphics or links to videos or articles for more information. The Church could tweet

scriptures or bible verses on X with a link to a video or article to better explain its meaning and relevance. Another popular function is the option to repost another user's tweet to their own feed for their follower's to see and react to. The Catholic Church would benefit from using this feature because it offers them a way to spread the Gospel with others.

YouTube is another way the Church can evangelize in the digital age. For example, one way to share the word of the Lord is through a feature known as "YouTube Shorts". This is a way creators can share short clips of their videos to draw viewers' attention. This could promote the Church by encouraging people to join or grow an interest in the Catholic faith.

One final way technology can help the Catholic Church is through podcasts and music. Spotify is a service that offers podcasts, video, and digital music content all over the world. By using podcasts to promote the Catholic faith, listeners can learn about other's inspirational journeys with God and how they grew through their faith. The Church can also collaborate with faith-based influencers to expand their reach to younger audiences. These podcasts can be shared on the Church's social media pages and website. Modern religious music is another way to connect with and attract younger Catholics and/or those who are looking for God's guidance. Not only can music be used as entertainment, it can also be shared as a way to connect with others as well as the Catholic community.

For the Catholic Church to fully evangelize in the digital age, it requires change and discomfort. However, embracing change - and taking advantage of technology - will allow the Church to spread the word of God to those who are yet to embrace and/or live out their faith.