



AMERICA/UNITED STATES - Catholics and New Media: New opportunities to evangelize the digital continent

Washington (Agenzia Fides) - 62 percent of adult U.S. Catholics, representing an estimated 36.2 million people, have a profile on Facebook; 58 percent of Catholics age of 30 and under share content such as pictures, articles and comments at least once a week, and nearly a third of all surveyed said they would like their pastors and bishops to blogs: these are some results of a study released by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, CARA at Georgetown University.

"Catholic New Media Use in the United States, 2012," surveyed 1,047 self-identified Catholics. The study was released on November 11, at an Encounter With Social Media, sponsored by the Department of Communications of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in conjunction with the U.S. bishops annual Fall General Assembly in Baltimore.

The report, sent to Fides Agency by the USCCB, "suggests many opportunities for the Church to engage with those who live on the Digital continent, as Pope Benedict XVI describes this new culture of communication," said the Bishop of Salt Lake City, His Excellency Mons. John Wester, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Communications. "We can approach this as missionaries, eager to find God already present among the inhabitants of this world and to engage them, especially young people, in meaningful dialogue about morals and values in this new public square."

The adult Catholic population is nearly evenly divided by those aware of the Church's presence online and those who are not aware of this. About a quarter (24 percent) indicated said that the Church is "somewhat" or "very" visible, while another quarter said it is "only a little" or "not very" visible (23 percent). More than half (53 percent) were unaware of any significant presence. The Catholic website most often visited regularly by self-identified adults Catholics is their parish website: about one in 10 say they visit once a month or more often. This is equivalent to 5.3 million individuals. About 80 percent of respondents took the survey in English; 16 percent took it Spanish. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 13/11/2012)