

The Possibilities of Using Electronic Media in the New Evangelization in Slovakia

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In Slovak society the normal development of the local Church comprising the gradual use of means of communication was interrupted by the onset of communism. Despite the persecution which suppressed the life of the Catholic Church by liquidation of all Catholic schools, hospitals and welfare facilities, publishing houses and ultimately religious orders as well and sowed fear among believers by the fact that a lot of them were convicted in stage-managed trials and given long-time sentences, a lot of brave Christians went on forming small communities. In this environment non-periodic and periodic samizdat originated, and finally the essential feature of the Catholic Church proved important – community. At the same time productive cooperation between priests and committed laity developed. This experience appears to be a fruitful model for the use of the modern electronic media, especially the Internet and social networks for the new evangelization in Slovakia. It shows the need to recreate the environment of open dialogue, support and cooperation between priests and laity, especially young people in the area of evangelizing use of the electronic media. Young people need the enthusiasm of the gospel, living Christian community, the sense of responsibility for the proclamation of faith, the space of freedom and trust, encouragement, but not moralizing. The trust of hierarchy in the youth brings the trust of youth in hierarchy. Young people are critical of authorities and are willing to accept the only natural authority; they want to see the adults' example of Christian life, the power of gospel lived to the fullest. For them, this is the most efficient driving force for their own involvement in the new evangelization.

Keywords: community, communication, manipulation of values, evangelization, social networks, the Internet, samizdat

1. Historical Perspective

Since 1918, the Catholic Church in Slovakia has been gradually building its own means of media communication, at the beginning mostly magazines, e.g. the weekly *Catholic Newspaper*. Not even the communist regime dared to ban it, but after 1948 communists gained control over it using priests who collaborated with them. Besides, a lot of monthly magazines for various age-groups were being published and reporting on various types of spirituality. During the First Slovak Republic (1939 – 1945) the government relying mostly on masses of Catholics imposed censorship on the press, but at the same time in a way supported it. After the renewal of pre-war status and the change of regime the Communists were increasingly coming to power, which eventually culminated in the 1948 political coup in which they definitively took power. In 1949 “the government abolished all Catholic magazines except for *The Catholic Newspaper* and *The Spiritual Shepherd* and nationalized all publishers. In the course of 1949 some convents were abolished as well and their inhabitants imprisoned or dispersed eventually. For example, already in February the state confiscated the Basilian Monastery in Prešov and twelve monks were imprisoned”.¹

Anton Hlinka in his book *The Power of the Weak and Weakness of the Powerful* assessed the situation of the Catholic Church in Slovakia during communism. “In 1100 years of its existence between the Tatra Mountains and the Pannonian Puszta the Church has never experienced such a period of human helplessness and hopelessness. But perhaps never before it had excelled in such power of its weakness like at this difficult time. Persecuted, imprisoned, socially discriminated against, ridiculed, bullied, they often acted like fearless, balanced and free citizens, aware of their rights and responsibilities, who do not ask what they may do, but what they ought to do. In the face of them the holders of absolutist power were powerless. So the strong appeared to be weak and the weak strong.”² The communist regime established the state monopoly in the sphere of the media, which like a tool of power served the promotion of Marxist ideology. The media were subjected to strict censorship, intentional manipulation, bringing to their authors the lack of freedom, which developed up to self-censorship.

This period showed the power of the samizdat media and also the electronic media, which brought consolation to persecuted Catholics. The electronic media – Slovak broadcasting of Radio Free Europe and Voice of America – played the special role in Bratislava’s Good Friday on March 25, 1988.³ It should be emphasized that this peaceful demonstration had its large background in the small communities of active Catholics and in the Catholic

1 HLINKA, A.: *Sila slabých a slabosť silných*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990, p. 33.

2 HLINKA, A.: *Sila slabých a slabosť silných*, p. 10.

3 Cf. Bratislavský Veľký piatok – odkaz jednoty Slovenska. In: *Magnificat Slovakia*. <http://www.magnificat.sk/archiv-antona-seleckeho/bratislavsky-velky-piatok-odkaz-jednoty-slovenska/> (20. 7. 2013).

samizdat, which gradually started in this environment. Ján Šimulčík adds: "One of the functions of the communities was the transmission of information. In the early seventies, as the communities began to emerge, there was little information available about the happening in the Church. Over time not only the number of communities but also the amount of information increased, and their oral transmission and writing down was time consuming. As the amount of information was huge, it was ineffective to repeat the same amount of information for numerous different groups. Over the years students slowly dispersed in Slovakia and despite their friendships persisted, a closer contact was missing. Therefore probably in 1975 Silvester Krčméry and Vladimír Jukl started visiting these people and through them making new acquaintances in their location to gradually create the unifying awareness. During the gatherings it was vivid that people were feeling the lack of information, formative and studying materials, which were usually available only in Bratislava where was the centre of religious happenings in that time. The urge of these two needs: the effective transmission of information in the communities and providing informational and formative materials to people outside of Bratislava, gave impulses for the beginning of the Slovak periodical samizdat. Moreover outside inputs joined them. The first one was from Lithuania where the samizdat magazine was published with the title *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania*, which played a significant role by developing the secret Church in the country. The magazine was smuggled also to Slovakia, where it became a great challenge for Catholic activists. The second input came from Poland. During gatherings Polish friends were encouraging the activists in Slovakia: "You have to publish your own magazine which will connect the rest of the Catholics in Slovakia, where you will be informing each other about your activities."⁴

Here it was expressed what was described by Anton Hlinka like *the Power of the Weak*. "The world of samizdat had different attributes than the world of totalitarianism, which was trying to silence it. While working on the samizdat the outside old world was locked. The new world was opened. The world of freedom."⁵ The political instruments of frightening could not affect it because believers gave freedom to themselves even for the price of great sacrifices. The power of this free productivity in post Czecho-Slovakia was documented shortly after the collapse of communism by Jan Vlk, Vendula Vaňková, Jiří Novotný by working on the independent samizdat bibliography with a historical topic. The bibliography, which consists of respectful 1649 items, was presented in The 17th International Summit of Historicists in Madrid in summer of 1990.⁶ Rudolf Lesňák who immediately after the collapse of communism studied the Catholic samizdat topic states: "Even the more significant

4 ŠIMULČÍK, J.: *Svetlo z podzemia*. Prešov : Michal Vaško, 1997, p. 17–18.

5 ŠIMULČÍK, J.: *Svetlo z podzemia*, p. 9.

6 Cf. VLK, J., VAŇKOVÁ, V., NOVOTNÝ, J.: *Minulost a dějiny v českém a slovenském samizdatu 1970 – 1989 : Bibliografie*. Brno : Nakladatelství Doplněk, 1993, p. 7.

damage than the loss of written documents and unfortunately even faster is the passing away of the samizdat writers and witnesses. These losses are immensely sensitive in the sphere of spiritual life, especially in life and awareness (even more unawareness) of younger and the youngest generation. It is even bigger damage that the liquidation stream of communist ideologists was mainly focused on the religious life of the Christian majority citizens of Slovakia. "Despite this and mainly for this in this sphere were developed the strongest, dominantly spiritually aimed activities of defense and resistance to the dictation of the atheist regime."⁷

Currently Slovak society is still deeply marked by the consequences of communism which sowed fear and distrust over people and disrupted social relationships. However people live physically closer together squashed in a small place, humanly and personally they are distant and alienated. "This phenomenon is called desocialization. Mainly young people feel the strong urge for community which they lack in their family; consequently they search for different forms of gatherings. They refuse too much organizing which they are full of and some are even allergic to it. They desire for the personal freedom and spontaneous creativity. Meanwhile they refuse the usual models of moral and social behavior and they want to create their own."⁸

The collapse of communism revived and developed of the Catholic media in Slovakia. a lot of samizdat magazines are published publically now. The free productivity of *The Catholic Newspaper* was renewed and the Catholic radio, television and Internet portals on various levels from the official page of the Catholic Church in Slovakia with its press office, to individual dioceses, religious orders and Christian communities up to parishes and personal pages. In the present in Slovakia there are: Lumen Radio, Television Lux, the Internet portal TKKBS, the portal Postoy.sk – politic, religion, society and culture, Christ-Net.sk Slovak Catholic domain, KrestanskyPortal.sk, the Slovak informational-reporting Christian portal Svetkrestanstva.sk, the Department of Journalism of The Catholic University in Ružomberok.⁹ Dioceses, religious orders and Christian movements have their own portals, too.¹⁰

It may seem that everything is all right. However the situation is more complicated when we look at the possibilities which the electronic media provide us from the perspective their aim and watching. In his answer for the magazine *Faith and Life* to the survey about the usage, benefits and possible

7 LESŇÁK, R.: *Listy z podzemia : Súborná dokumentácia kresťanskej samizdatovej publicistiky na Slovensku v rokoch 1945 – 1989*. Bratislava : USPO, 1998, p. 7.

8 CSONTOS, L.: Nová evanjelizácia ako nevyhnutnosť. In: *Viera a život*, XXII, 2012, 3, p. 5.

9 Cf. Masmédiá. In: *Katolícka cirkev na Slovensku*. <http://www.kbs.sk/obsah/sekcia/h/masmedia-50/p/elektronicke> (20. 7. 2013); *Postoy.sk dialógom k pravde*. In: <http://www.postoy.sk/> (20. 7. 2013); *Slovenský kresťanský portál*. In: <http://christ-net.sk/> (20. 7. 2013); *Svet kresťanstva : Portál o diani v Katolíckej cirkvi a v kresťanskom svete*. In: <http://www.svetkrestanstva.sk/> (20. 7. 2013)

10 Cf. Cirkevné provincie. In: *Katolícka cirkev na Slovensku*. <http://www.kbs.sk/obsah/sekcia/h/cirkevne-provincie>; Rehole a spoločenstvá. In: *Katolícka cirkev na Slovensku*. <http://www.kbs.sk/obsah/sekcia/h/rehole-a-spolocenstva> (20. 7. 2013).

risks of the Internet and other new media Imrich Gazda, referring to a French bishop Falco Léandri and the Vatican document about the Internet, says:

“As its name (of the document) indicates: *The Power and Weakness of the Church in the World of the Internet*, the French bishop tries to openly and precisely answer to the question, whether the Church manages to perform the deaconry of culture in the area of the current digital continent. According to his words the Church will have to return from theological tractates to brief and clear kerygma added with strong but easily remembering symbols which are obviously typical for Christianity. The language of the present internet communication is brief, full of shortcuts and graphical symbols.

The Church also has to reconcile the message which offers that it is just one of the possible ideas on the ‘market’. Mainly the Internet is the space which reflects thinking as desires of nowadays people, to which the Church has to answer. The advantage is that its constitutional element is the Word and Love. According to the new situation the Church has to listen more.

The bishop Falco Léandri was referring to the survey aimed at the French Internet space which showed that Protestant pages are more visited than Catholics’. According to him this also proves that when Protestants listen, Catholics speak. The second reason is that Catholic pages are used internally. They speak their own dedicated language and are used by their own dedicates. In contrast, Protestants pages want to get users by using the Internet as their mean and carrier of evangelization.”¹¹

Briefly, we could summarize that the present world of the electronic media requires the new evangelization and offers strong means for the new evangelization also in Slovakia which have not been used adequately yet. It is important to make a good use of the experience from the time of persecution, when the key role played communities and samizdat, which created the free space for the communication without unrealistic information and valued orientation. Firstly, we have to realize the power of the media and their influence on perceiving values. However the Christian opinion is critical, it is not refusing. It is principally open for the use of the present electronic media.

2. Values and the Media

For the world of the electronic media it is typical the purposeful aimed manipulation. For example, here it can be presented the way of informing about various happenings. The significant area is the news service, in which is paid a special attention to some happenings but others stay unnoticed. For example “in the news about World Youth Day in Madrid reports mainly referred to a few antipope protests. The other was pointed out by the Catholic

¹¹ ELIÁŠOVÁ, A.: Anketa Využívanie, prínosy a možné riziká internetu a iných nových médií. Odpoveď Imrich Gazda. In: *Viera a život*, XX, 2010, 5, p. 30.

agency referring to a full square of Puerta del Sol where two millions fans of Real Madrid gathered, but just a half million protesters gathered for Family and Life"¹². Television viewers could notice also the contradiction between the estimated numbers of participants of both happenings as density on the square.

The similar situation happened again during the large demonstration for Family in Paris on Mothers' Day in spring 2013, when the demonstration for marriage like a pledge of a man and woman, the media interpreted like a demonstration against homosexuals and according their favour reported the number of participants. In the comment of Lukáš Krivošík *Squares and Masses* we can read: "The police affirm that the centre of Paris was overcrowded with around 300 thousand people. Moreover, according to the organizers demonstrators were up to 1,4 million. Anyway, the large number of protesters is surprising as the interest rate spectrum, which reflect: That not only Catholics, or Protestants, but also Jews, Muslims, atheists, even the antagonists of president agenda from their own homosexual lines! Such diverse groups demonstrated in Paris. The strongly confident French protests demonstrate us in Slovakia that we have to use our own brain and do not accept every extraordinary modern trend without reservations and do not jump into a water well just because others have done it."¹³ In addition, they show the power of social network which played the important role in organising.

The electronic media are used intensively like economical instruments which by advertising increase demand for some specific products. This growth of the demand also affects the perception of values. Advertising is focused on the systematical shift in the scale of values which is managing thankfully to its scientific arrangements. It transforms from what is nice to be needed, from needed to be urgent and from urgent to be inevitable. In the end, it straps a person in to its brand like a sport club its fans. In this way a *homo sapiens* becomes a *homo consumens* who is controlled by fine and effective tentacles of advertising. It leads him to an irresponsible waste which has tremendous ecological consequences.¹⁴ Next, with it is related the appropriation of religion and morality however faith and morality are mainly of privacy concerns of a person. Material issues are the most relevant and important but religion is only an extension. "In the past a guarantor of morality was the association of institutions like the Church and state. Now morality becomes more and more of privacy and personal concerns. Everyone is his own judge in matters of morality and values. This is assumed to become the advantage of modern times. Thankfully to this advantage the significant improvement is happening in comparison to previous times in which the political and moral freedom was the privilege of a small number of individuals or some social classes. In reality

12 FREIOVÁ, M.: Médiá a realita. In: *Viera a život*, XXI, 2011, 5, p. 10.

13 KRIVOŠÍK, L.: Námestia masy. In: *Aktuality.sk*. <http://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/225615/komentar-namestia-a-masy/> (25. 7. 2013).

14 Porov. CSONTOS, L.: Byť otvorení pre znamenia času. In: *Nová evanjelizácia : Zborník sympózia s medzinárodnou účasťou*. Bratislava : Lúč, 1992, p. 32.

this advantage was not connected with spiritual advancing of an individual or society."¹⁵

We face up to the first wave of relativity in confrontation with the mono-political world, in which *sacrum* and culture were discovered without conflicts and where their principal contribution and influence were created on the base of consensus. When we observe various societies and various cultures which have entered the process of information transmission increasingly, we can notice that not all of them have the same models, that a certain confrontation has started which is mainly critical of every cultural and ethical absolutism.¹⁶ Some important consequences are vivid in the hegemony of the electronic media in perceiving values:

- a) The mass media have been developed in organizations which are set up on the manipulation with symbols (e.g. press agencies, public programmes, market surveys).
- b) The physical distance, time and social borders are diminishing therefore the mass media enlarge their spectators. In spite of other areas, it is the most significant mean of information transmission and in this way it is the mean of broadening the horizon of different individuals.
- c) The mass media have not only implemented new concepts of communication and interpersonal reaction, but they have also standardized language.
- d) The mass media have become a referee of social status. The mass media cause growing or prevalence of authority prestige, give or take space to a person, organization and movement.
- e) The mass media have grown in the meaning over the personal dimensions like factors of social life.
- f) The mass media have modified structures of family, a traditional role of authority, provided some management for family problems, and created new possibilities of relaxation activities.
- g) The mass media together with producing masses have contributed to emphasize the meaning of material values and to perceive the importance of the economic sector in society.
- h) The mass media have speeded up processes of spreading culture, introduced city behavior and values to the countryside; therefore in general it became the factor of social changes.¹⁷

Now we will present some examples. "When studying the Slovak media market, it is impossible not to notice the gradual and accelerating trend of tabloid press, including the electronic media and the Internet. When compared with the last ten years the number of magazines grew rapidly

15 CSONTOS, L.: Masovokomunikačné prostriedky, kult slobody a vnímanie hodnôt. In: *Viera a život*, XVIII, 2008, 5, p. 11.

16 Porov. CSONTOS, L.: Masovokomunikačné prostriedky, kult slobody a vnímanie hodnôt. In: *Viera a život*, XVIII, 2008, 5, p. 8.

17 Porov. CSONTOS, L.: *Úvod do filozofie kultúry*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 1996, p. 141-142.

with tabloid content mainly, or even new titles started which are oriented on tabloid predominantly. The special area is formed of women's and lifestyle magazines, in which the significant part is the information about life and lifestyle of celebrities and various personalities. Similarly the other press of this character became much more tabloid oriented. However today even serious and opinion-making newspapers do not restrain tabloid touched headings."¹⁸ Andrea Eliášová continues in her studies of the Slovak contemporary media space and indicates to its primary motivations. "It is widely spoken that the only motivation of tabloid publishers is the effort to make profit by salability. Understandably it can be a motivating criterion however in the background there can be other factors which stay un-discussed or unwritten – for example, the effort to influence the lifestyle, brand awareness or prestige by tabloid, the effort to distinguish from opinion-making or other published titles, determine the tone in journalism etc. a lot of factors are interconnected with this topic which could also be a subject of studies."¹⁹

Imrich Gazda is observing the creation of a new social situation by means of the media. "The biggest power, which the media acquired from religion, is the capability to create a new moral order which has been successfully proposed to millions of recipients. The new morality is radically against old principles. In the introduction of his book *The Death of the West* an American conservative thinker and politician Patrik J. Buchanan summarized it in words: Now the world is upside down. What was right and truthful yesterday, today it is bad and fake. What used to be immoral and unpolite – promiscuity, abortion, euthanasia, suicide – it has become modern and praiseworthy. Nietzsche called this re-evaluation of all values. Old virtues became sins and old sins became virtues."²⁰ In this way modern myths are created. Jana Levická refers to false myths about the family of more/many children, which spread in current Slovak society: "The myth: the family of more/many children is the Romany family. At the edge of the century even in scientific literature we can meet with the opinion that more-many children families are connected with the Romany surroundings. If according to available data (www.portalstatistics.sk) in 2001 Romany families represented the portion 1,7% of the overall number of our families, there is no assumption that it represents 44% complete and 2,0% incomplete families, in which lived more than four children."²¹ This myth has been still fed.

Western democracy is based on faith in progress. "However the term *progress* is still unclear today. In the last time it has been used to describe not only the scientific-technical development leading to the improvement of

18 ELIÁŠOVÁ, A.: Bulvár, médiá, ich tvorcovia a výzvy pre mediálnu kritiku. In: *Viera a život*, XIX, 2009, 5, p. 3.

19 ELIÁŠOVÁ, A.: Bulvár, médiá, ich tvorcovia a výzvy pre mediálnu kritiku. In: *Viera a život*, XIX, 2009, 5, p. 3.

20 GAZDA, I.: Vzťah médií a náboženstva v postmodernej dobe. In: *Viera a život*, XXI, 2011, 5, p. 5.

21 LEVICKÁ, J.: Súčasná slovenská viacdetná rodina – mýty a realita. In: *Rodina v súčasnom svete : Mnohodetná rodina – bremeno, alebo zdroj sily?* Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2008, p. 64.

material conditions of human life, but it is becoming an idealistic imperative in the meaning of words: All has to be subordinated to progress. The scientific and technical development is finishing of being the mean of better quality life, but it is becoming the aim for its own sake. The messianism of 21st Century and Marxism – the most distinctive secular religion of 20th Century, are based on claiming that thankfully to the scientific and technical improvement a new human being and world can be created.²² There are again efforts to create heaven on earth and new utopic theories are being created which have religious features but without the God. According to the opinion of Imrich Gazda: “Despite different social conditions, all new contemporary messianisms including the ideology of progress, are identical in denying transcendence and claiming that the guarantee of a new man and new world arrival is the development of material conditions in life. In each time a man is prone to succumb to this idea because of the material assurance and scientific-technical advantages give him the feeling of omnipotence.”²³ However all messianisms in the effort of freeing a man deny the God and religion, in the end, as historical experience proves, they become slavery systems and devastate a man, e.g.: communisms in Soviet Russia and its satellite states, national socialisms in Germany and in the states occupied by Hitler.

3. From Defence to Use

Despite the Church is aware of the importance of the electronic media, in the Catholic environment prevails a defensive attitude. It is a fact that also in the present this space is subordinated to various restrictions, which are viewring, preference of negative news, tabloid and with it connected the orientation of values. The purposeful manipulation interferes with it and very often the effort to maximize the profit and the influence on society. It is a fact, that today “so the media eliminate the borders between what is good and what is bad, between beauty and ugliness argumenting, that for every medial receiver is good or beautiful something else. This thinking reaches so far that it creates space for presentation of pornography and violence like some forms of art”²⁴. Revitalization of values brings together ethical failures in the media. “The primary reason of the ethical failures is subordinating of media productivity to profit criteria and ignoring the demand of goodness for all like an abstract idea which is incompatible with the market demand.”²⁵ It is a failure of a man because the own media are indifferent. “As technique is ambivalent on its own, in the same way the media are neutral in values,

22 GAZDA, I.: Pokrok a etika vo svetle informačných technológií. In: *Viera a život*, XX, 2010, 6, p. 4.

23 GAZDA, I.: Pokrok a etika vo svetle informačných technológií. In: *Viera a život*, XX, 2010, 6, p. 4.

24 GAZDA, I.: Pokrok a etika vo svetle informačných technológií. In: *Viera a život*, XX, 2010, 6, p. 8.

25 GAZDA, I.: Pokrok a etika vo svetle informačných technológií. In: *Viera a život*, XX, 2010, 6, p. 7.

too. The spirit of an instrument is given by its user, a man, on whom depends positive or negative effects."²⁶

A man, who lives in the mass media society, faces a new challenge: necessity to intensify the capacity of analyzing, assumption and choice, so the gigantic "news market" may not monopolize the dominancy of one idea. It is determined that information in its omnipotent meaning can become easily the oppressing instrument for cultural system.

Western democracy, which more intensively gains liberal dimension and even the anarchistic look, if it wants to stay the real democracy, has to renew the other two mottos of French revolution: equality and fraternity. Only in this way things can be revealed, and they are well distinguished from the market economy and triumphal capitalism (the market without rules, borders and ethical limits): freedom of events and entrepreneurship – doing business (what are the values) vs. glorifying weird liberalizms; freedom of press and communication vs. TV management in hands of egoistic media owners for the protection of their egoistic interests and arbitrariness. Here belongs the critical summary which offers Nataša Slavíková: "With the expansion of computers, the Internet and mobile phones also a new type of addiction emerged – to the Internet, internet or mobile communication or computer games. Escaping to the virtual world, worsening of social relationships and closing inside from the surrounding, splitting of identity to real and virtual – up to the loss of contact with reality, these are the features which should not leave parents to stay careless. (...) It is important that the media do not reflect reality but they create it. The media are the construction containing ideological messages as messages of values, and those private ones have mainly commercial interest. (...) The structure of values and the integrity of a man are therefore directed at questions related to factors, which in the present participate in fragmentation and discontinuity of a man. Without the integrity, based on the strong and consistent concept of values and total identity, in the life of a man the presence of a very important factor is fading away, which is the aim of life. If the orientation on the aim of life is decreasing, the psycho-hygiene of a man is worsening, but increasing the number of frustration effects, strengthening neurotic and depressive tendencies. By today's media presented the ideal of a good life is based on searching for experiences of freedom in the form of travelling, adrenaline sports, free lazy non-stress lifestyle connected only with enjoyment."²⁷

The rapid change of mentality is interconnected with it, which has the greatest impact on family. The concept of "Marriage because of Love" is becoming proclaimed, which is connected with the idea that the marriage is founded on love and free decision of both partners, so not because of the

26 GAZDA, I.: Pokrok a etika vo svetle informačných technológií. In: *Viera a život*, XX, 2010, 6, p. 6.

27 SLAVÍKOVÁ, N.: Rodičia stratení vo virtuálnom svete. In: *Culture and Morals of Family in Globalised Society*. Ed. Vladimír Ďurikovič, Mária Ďurikovičová. Trnava, 2012, p. 181.

wealth or parents.²⁸ From one point we can agree with this idea, but from the other it is the reduction of the engagement concept of wedding which is traditionally accepted in various cultures.²⁹ In the Catholic Church it is applied the definition of *The Codex of Catholic Law*: "The marriage agreement, in which a man and a woman assign the community between them for the overall life and with its natural characteristic it is focused on the good of the married couple, delivering and bringing up children as well, Jesus Christ dignified it to the status of holiness among baptized."³⁰ Its fundamental features are unity and inseparability. Mainly the tabloid media deny these characteristic features what has a great impact on Catholics in Slovakia. According to the sociological research from 2007 year 53% Catholics agree with divorce, 56% agree with cohabitation, a marriage on trial, and only 18% has the obvious catholic attitude.³¹

The Church speaks nicely about the media however the reality is very distant sometimes. "They speak the clear language and are formative for good medial policy of the Church. However just here is the problem. It has been here for almost two thousand years, if it is just alone and is ageing for its own sake in the library, it will not go better with the Church. The Holy Writ has to be implemented in life here and now."³² Next, this applies to the documents of the Church, which refer to the media. In the Apostolic Letter of John Paul II from 2005 *Fast Improvement* we can read: "The phenomenon of social means of communication is the impulse for the Church for the pastoral and cultural review to be able to face up to the epochal change which we are just experiencing. Mainly the pastors of the Church have to draw the attention to it: it is really important to manage the captivating presentation of evangelization, which would motivate for its listening and acceptance."³³ It is questionable how much Pope's appeal is becoming also a reality in the life of the local Church.

Interesting shifts are in the opinions about family in the Czech media which have a significant influence in Slovakia too. As Michaela Freiová says: "A few years passed, three or four, and the situation in the Czech press looked similarly. Newspapers returned to the schemes of fifties' years: a woman who takes care of family is inferior, only a paid employment gives her own dignity: taking care of children should be given to institutions – nurseries, kindergartens and afterschool clubs. Marriage based on complementing of man and woman

28 Cf. SIEVERNICH, M.: Problém rozvedených a znovuzosobášených v Cirkvi z pastorálno-teologického hľadiska. In: *Teologický časopis*, 2010, 1, p. 49.

29 Cf. GIRGIS, S., ANDERSON, R. T., GEORGE, R. P.: Čo je to manželstvo : Obhajoba zväzku muža a ženy. Kolégium Antona Neuwirtha, 2013, p. 88–89.

30 CIC, can. 1055.

31 Cf. MATULNÍK, J., KRATOCHVÍLA, M., KYSELICA, J.: Religiozita, rodina a reprodukčné správanie obyvateľov Slovenska. In: MATULNÍK, J., et al.: *Analýza religiozity katolíkov na Slovensku : Poznatky zo sociologického výskumu*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2008, p. 182.

32 RÖTHLIN, H. P.: Dobrá zvesť v modernom svete : Ku komunikačnej politike Katolíckej cirkvi. In: *Nová evanjelizácia V*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 1996, p. 138–139.

33 JÁN PAVOL II.: Apoštolský list *Rýchly rozvoj*. Vatikán 2005. In: *Dokumenty pápežov*. <http://www.kbs.sk/obsah/sekcia/h/dokumenty-a-vyhlasenia/p/dokumenty-papezov/c/rychly-rozvoj-50> (26. 7. 2013).

role is the stereotype which has to be overcome."³⁴ The media systematically pay attention to legislative processes in various countries about registered partnerships and even efforts to redefine family.

In the contemporary society we can observe more changes of time which are the challenge for the new evangelization. It is a fact that people live physically squashed in a small place, but humanly and personally they are distant and alienated. This feature is called "desocialization". "Years of the postmodern show that despite the loss of social connections and growth of individualism in human beings the need for affiliation is still alive on a limited scale. Aristotle's argument that a man is *zoón politikon* (a social human being) has lasting validity. Despite the communities, organizations and associations with strong structures and/or distinct unifying features (the Church, nation, marriage) go through internal crisis, people create and look for the possibility of being in a relationship without commitments. Not much offers more this possibility than the world of media."³⁵ Freiová considers the second problem "ghettoization" of society. While in the normal social contact a man has to deal with people of different opinions in his surroundings, on the Internet a small group of similarly thinking people can be created and stay in its inner space. Therefore the rational discursus vanishes.³⁶ The real world with real relationships is still changing to the virtual world with virtual relationships which a man can create according to his own wishes.

The contemporary civilization and culture brought the beginning of completely new areas of life. The development of modern science and technique brought even revolution in the area of information transmission and new ways of communication. Maybe we are right to speak about the informational society. The development of informational and communicational technologies brought the fast exchange of information, cultural works, more solidarity of humanity, as the feeling of certain unity of humanity. On the other hand, these means are often in the service of doubtful interests, which are distant from the values of evangelization and sometimes mainly directed anti-Christianity.³⁷

It seems that the power of the opinion-making media is unlimited, but for sure it is not like that. Just the experience of the power of samizdat in the time of totalitarianism shows that there are different means which are not under various pressures and mean the free space. "It seems that the power of the mainstream media has been coordinated by the new media. Especially, the Internet has become so called the new 'samizdat'. However there is a lot of trashy writing, this could be found in the samizdat too – but not in such a large quantity: typing on the typing machine and rotating with the hand of rotaprint were more difficult and took longer than writing on PC. However searching for the serious resources of information is more complicated today."³⁸

34 FREIOVÁ, M.: Médiá a realita. In: *Viera a život*, XXI, 2011, 5, p. 10.

35 GAZDA, I.: Vztah médií a náboženstva v postmodernej dobe. In: *Viera a život*, XXI, 2011, 5, p. 4.

36 Cf. FREIOVÁ, M.: Médiá a realita. In: *Viera a život*, XXI, 2011, 5, p. 12.

37 Cf. CSONTOS, L.: Nová evanjelizácia ako nevyhnutnosť. In: *Viera a život*, XXII, 2012, 3, p. 4.

38 FREIOVÁ, M.: Médiá a realita. In: *Viera a život*, XXI, 2011, 5, p. 11.

Indeed, it is more available to publish on the Internet than in the past it was publishing the samizdats, therefore this space seems to be very important for the new evangelization.

4. The Power of the Internet for the New Evangelization

Michaela Freiová says: "For a Christian the Internet is a way which helps him to fight and get through not only his opinions but oppressed information, too. When we started the web *Res Claritati*, the representatives of the left establishment in the Catholic Church were against publishing the news about the persecution of Christians. Despite that gradually the topic broke through in public too."³⁹ In Slovakia it is the space of freedom for spreading information, which is being pushed away by the other media to the area of noninteresting information which are unnecessary.⁴⁰ The power of the Internet and mainly social networks was shown with its masivness in the president campaign of Barack Obama.

"The president election in 2008 in the USA brought the change in the pre-election campaign to such an extent, that Barack Obama was also called 'the first Internet president'. The use of the Internet was like a mean which activated the masses of people, potential voters, and the mean of fundraising. With a new way it used benefits of social networks and mobile marketing. The social networks have broadened possibilities of the Internet and in the rank of the Internet they created groups, so called communities. From 'communities' which are based on the technological core of the Internet, today are distinguished the communities which gather people of the same interests, and the Internet is for them the mean of communication. These groups are enlarging with the Internet coverage and services, like chat, forums, discussion groups, which for the first time put an Internet consumer to the role of a creator, gathering only on the core of the same interests. As Barack Obama and his team presented, even the Nets are institutional means of communication."⁴¹

It is not only revolutionary how Barack Obama used social networks, but also the fact, that the own social net was introduced BarackObama.com. That was using special means which not only increased the standard of participation of potential voters, but also possibilities of fundraising. The next difference is the principle of using social networks in their strategic interconnection to all communicational strategy. Raulf Harsfoursh, a member of Obama's team

³⁹ FREIOVÁ, M.: Médiá a realita. In: *Viera a život*, XXI, 2011, 5, p. 11.

⁴⁰ Cf. DOLEŽAL, B.: Samizdat v éře internetu. In: *Události: Politický zápisník Bohumila Doležala*. <http://bohumildolezal.lidovky.cz/texty/uo28-09.htm> (5. 7. 2013).

⁴¹ PÁV, J.: *První internetový prezident*, s. 3. In: http://www.slideshare.net/honza_pav/barack-obama-predvolebni-kampan (4. 5. 2013).

dealing with "The New Media" states that as soon as you have a vision, you can start using social networks like a mean which helps you to achieve the vision. Without this vision the social network is just the other Internet page.⁴² In the social networks the main aim of the campaign was the effort to give to potential voters the means which they could use to be able not only to participate like voters but also like creators of the overall process.⁴³

The Internet like a symbol of time we can notice also in the successful presidential pre-election campaign of the minister of foreign affairs Karel Schwarzenberg in 2013 year. According to the sociological survey televisions were vividly pushing through Miloš Zeman and Jan Fischer, however on the Internet they were greatly overcome by Schwarzenberg, whom they presented like an old dozing off politician. On the contrary, his internet campaign spoke about his personal qualities, by which he addressed mainly young generation. Czech experts commented this success. On Sunday at one o'clock in the afternoon on the social network Facebook 91 018 people proclaimed "I will vote in the 2nd round and I vote Karel" and next 4 232 stated, that maybe they will go to vote. They were invited to the vote by Karel Schwarzenberg who created this "event". Supporters of the minister of foreign affairs invited to the ballot boxes the next 278 885 users of the social network Facebook. Here the voting team played a great role, which made him visible and readable on the virtual space of the Internet. The creative manager of the firm VCCP Dejan Stajnberger announced: "Something happened what every brand would want in the world. Its consumers were in the same time its fans and they became its medium. They refer that maybe social networks have defeated televisions, but this cannot be proclaim primarily."⁴⁴

The events of presidential campaigns in the USA and the Czech Republic indicate how the power of the Internet can be used, which have become a part of our culture. Faith is not really a culture, but it cannot exist without being integrated into the culture. This refers to the fact that faith is the embodiment from the point of its structure.⁴⁵ "Faith is not a summary of philosophical principles or only moral norms, which would overlap history, and therefore on the one side they would be torn off them, and on the other side being able to live independent life."⁴⁶ Faith has to get on the Internet, in better words has to incarnate there. For this purpose a vision is needed which should be fulfilled.

42 Cf. Social media strategy : inside Obama's online campaign. In: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/story/2008/12/04/felesky-rahaf.html> (4. 5. 2013).

43 Cf. PÁV, J.: *První internetový prezident*, p. 39. In: http://www.slideshare.net/honza_pav/barack-obama-predvolebni-kampan (4. 5. 2013).

44 Cf. *Odborníci na marketing : Schwarzenberg bodoval na internetu. Ted' musí do ulic*. In: <http://byznys.ihned.cz/c1-59113190-odbornici-na-marketing-schwarzenberg-bodoval-na-internetu-ted-musi-do-ulic> (4. 5. 2013).

45 Cf. LICHNER, M.: *Durch den Wandel herausgefordert : Ein Blick auf die katholische Kirche in der Slowakei*. In: *Herder-Korrespondenz*, 11/2006, p. 572-577; LICHNER, M.: *La situation de la théologie en Slovaquie*. In: *Theologie im Osten Europas seit 1989 : Entwicklungen und Perspektiven*. Theologie Ost-West, Bd. 12. Ed. Albert Franz, Wolfgang Baum. Berlin; Münster, LIT Verlag, 2009, p. 44-48.

46 CSONTOS, L.: *Nová evanjelizácia ako nevyhnutnosť*. In: *Viera a život*, XXII, 2012, 3, p. 10.

Christianity has this vision for a long time: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mt 28,19-20) However Christians need a new dedication, a new enthusiasm which would be similar to fans. It is a challenge with a new enthusiasm to perform evangelization: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. a town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Mt 5,13-16)

Just the enthusiasm of the number of youth volunteers, who are at home on the Internet, needs support and not denial. The Internet provides the large space of freedom, but it also leads to responsibility. Mainly young people have desires for freedom, which fully belongs to every man, they refuse authorities and also including the authority of the Church, mainly concerning the sexual behavior and premarital purity. Their attitude towards authorities is very critical. It is a serious problem in education and in forming a young man who will overtake the responsibility for society in future. It is shown that young people are willing to accept the only natural authority and that has to be acquired. Young people want to see the example of Christian adult life, the power of fully fed evangelism.⁴⁷ Pope John Paul II often spoke about this use of youth potential like the future of the Church. The communication should lead to the creation of the public opinion in the Church and public opinion about the Church. John Paul II required that the communication inside the Church community and the communication with the world would be transparent, which requires the effort for a constructional dialog. Therefore in the Christian community the well informed public opinion should be strengthened to be able to distinguish correctly. In this area there is very necessary the cooperation between believing laity and their pastors, as the Second Vatican Council emphasized: "From these friendly relationships between laity and spiritual pastors can be expected a lot of good activities for the Church: so as the laity are getting the deeper feeling of their own responsibility, the willingness to help, and this simplifies the cooperation between laity and spiritual pastors. Pastors supported by the laity experience will be able to create a clearer and better opinion about as spiritual, as partly current happenings, so as the whole Church with a help of all members, could more effectively fulfill its mission during the life of world."⁴⁸ In this way the power of the Church, God's

47 Cf. CSONTOS, L.: Byť otvorení pre znamenia času. In: *Nová evanjelizácia : Zborník sympózia s medzinárodnou účasťou*, p. 33.

48 JÁN PAVOL II.: Apoštolský list *Rýchly rozvoj*. Vatikán 2005. In: *Dokumenty pápežov*. <http://www.kbs.sk/obsah/sekcia/h/dokumenty-a-vyhlasenia/p/dokumenty-papezov/c/rychly-rozvoj-50> (26. 7. 2013).

Kingdom, should be performed. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough." (Mt 13,33)

Here we can mention the creation of the social network Facebook. "At the beginning of the Facebook story is the fact, that this system was launched for Harvard University. Later more schools joined in and in 2007 year it became the biggest student server. Today this net is also used by firms, individual entrepreneurs, people of various interests, and education. Scientists agree that social networks are the marketing space of future, due to its ability to precisely aim at a customer... Despite that some people deny refuse to enter Facebook because they consider posting their profiles with photographs and information about their friends or interests and jobs publically in nowadays dangerous world for risky."⁴⁹ This story shows the power which was discovered by young people and thankfully to young enthusiastic Catholics it can become the mean for developing and spreading of God's Kingdom.

The virtual world and virtual communication are constantly spreading and it seems that they have not drawn their potential for creating community yet, which belongs to the core of the Church. Therefore mercy connects a man with God and meanwhile organizes and establishes one living secret organism, directed at Christ's community, in which God is becoming reachable for us. So as every life, also life in mercy is full dynamism, wants to infiltrate even deeper in life of individual people and still more to unify them among them and through them all world.⁵⁰ Kulisz reminds the quotes of spiritual fathers about the Church community, about a commune (coinonia). According to John of Damascus the Christian unity is described by Lord's sacrifice, when Lord called his body bread, which was made from a lot of grains, and its blood wine, which was made of a lot of grapes. Here he expresses that the Christian community was created by a lot of people who are unifying with Christ's body and blood and create his Secret body. He also indicates the idea of St. Cyprian, which defines the Christian unity based on Eucharist.⁵¹

The experience from the totalitarian regime points at the key meaning of community theology for the vitality of the Church. Thankfully to small communities conditions were created for the genesis of samizdat, which retrospectively helped their further development. The fact that the parish community is not always what it should really be, also indicates Jozef Kyselica, when he reminds the potential of parish community. "The parish can give the answer to a nowadays man, who is so often lost and disorientated, if it happens the community space of believers in the world and in the same time the symbol and the mean of calling all to a commune; in one word home, which

49 ELIÁŠOVÁ, A.: Nové médiá – virtuálna supervelmoc? In: *Viera a život*, XX, 2010, 5, p. 8.

50 Cf. KULISZ, J.: Eucharystia sakramentem jedności w rozumieniu Teilharda de Chardin. In: *Studia Theologica Varsaviensia*, 38, 2000, 2, p. 139.

51 Cf. KULISZ, J.: Eucharystia sakramentem jedności w rozumieniu Teilharda de Chardin. In: *Studia Theologica Varsaviensia*, 38, 2000, 2, p. 141.

is open for all and it is in service for all."⁵² It continues with the calling for the interconnection of sacral and liturgical living of faith with the common life. "Consequently the Church should stay on the thick tissue of human relationships, real communities, where the life of faith exists in the common thinking and where the practice is the real expression of faith and freedom too."⁵³ Just this tissue of relationships can be amended by the Internet and social networks.

The very important moment of post-conciliar time is still larger using of the new understanding of parish like the community of communities. Jozef Kyselica gives the example of the Parish of St. Francesca Cabrini in Rome. Early in 1969 it was introduced the neocatechumenal way in the first catechesis to the parish. From telling catecheses by first communities it was created together 25 communities with more than a thousand of adult members. Revival of parish life is vivid not only on Sunday attendance at the Holy Mass and Communion, but also on the increasing number of priest and religious order's professions. From the parish five priests were consecrated, twenty-three young men are in priest seminaries, four are in the religious order of Marist's and nineteen in the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Rome. One is a nun in the Convent of Clausula Clarisses'. Even 25% of members of the communities were completely distant from the Church, but with a help of community witnesses they joined the community. Overall, it can be said that the revival of the parish life progressed very well.⁵⁴

5. Conclusion

The area of the modern electronic media, modern informational and communicational technologies have become the domain of young generation, who was at the beginning of social networks and it is their greatest user. It depends on the orientation of values of those who contribute with their contents to the network, whether it will be overstocked with tastelessness, trash, which can be called anti-values, or it will be in service of communication of real values. It is shown that it is a non-censorship space for now which greatly enables what in the past enabled the samizdat. Thankfully to the development of small communities of Christians and their gradual growth mainly the periodical samizdat was distinguished like the inevitable informational and communicational mean. Here two important realities joined, the core feature of the Church – a commune and apostolic spirit of small communities. The cooperation of priests with laity in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council was marked as productive. The power of social networks and enthusiasm of young people were lately expressed in the good voting result of the presidential can-

52 KYSELICA, J. : *Odovzdávať vieru v súčasnej spoločnosti*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2006, p. 118.

53 KYSELICA, J. : *Odovzdávať vieru v súčasnej spoločnosti*, p. 90.

54 Cf. KYSELICA, J. : *Obnova farnosti cez neokatechumenát*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 1998, p. 132–139.

didate Karel Schwarzenberg in the Czech Republic, who represents classical values. The new evangelization is getting a great opportunity in the modern electronic media; however it will need the enthusiasm of young Christians, avid for evangelism, who intensively live their faith in the communities and this personal experience they will want to share with others, too. "As *biblia pauperum* with a help of pictures explained to uneducated people the basic truths of the Bible, so today media pictures claim the ability to explain the reality of the world."⁵⁵ These pictures can provide the Internet in various forms according the abilities of their creators. This requires the dialogue between priests and laity, in which they express their trust and support in spirit of John Paul II, who again and again emphasized that the youth is the future of the Church and hope of the new world.

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55 GAZDA, I.: Vzťah médií a náboženstva v postmodernej dobe. In: *Viera a život*, XXI, 2011, 5, p. 5.

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