Abstract

New forms of media require a special kind of ethical sensibility. Changes in the way we function in the modern world are greatly determined by the dominant media form. We are surrounded by changing forms of media and new technologies themselves are beginning to determine culture. A new kind of engagement in society and community life is being created by the internet. Do we need therefore a new kind of media ethics? No. We only need to learn how to apply old ethical values to new situations; we need to care about the way in which our messages are put across and we need to assume responsibility for the words we use – always concerned about the good of our recipients. The central postulate of media ethics during the pontificate of pope John Paul II was that the human being in all their social complexity must be the aim and measure of all forms of media and social communication. A secondary postulate was that the media must aim to educate its recipients to make informed choices, and must observe the standards of truth and social responsibility in the area of advertising. Pope Benedict XVI has recently built upon these postulates by arguing that a new discipline of infoethics in the area of communications is necessary to determine ethical criteria and standard in the same way that bioethics tries to do for medicine and sciences concerned with human life. In terms of „evangelizing” the media, the Church never seeks to impose its own ethical values onto the world of media and communications, rather it proposes a set of ethical criteria which flow out of the truth about man and the world. These are truth it receives, not ones it creates.

Key words: John Paul II, media, internet, advertising, ethics, infoethics, community, networks, journalist