

## **Vatican Aide Asks: Are You Corrupting Youth?**

On Eve of World Communications Day

LONDON, MAY 18, 2007 (Zenit.org).- The president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications invited journalists to do an examination of conscience to determine if everything they write is appropriate for audiences of all ages.

Archbishop John Foley said this Thursday in a speech he gave at a media day celebration at the Notre Dame Center in London, in preparation for the 41st World Communications Day.

The archbishop asked: "If you are involved in media aimed at a mass audience, is everything which you write, publish, broadcast or telecast fit to be seen, read or heard by young people? Will it improve them, perhaps educate them and enrich them culturally?"

"That's a good examination of conscience for all of us," he added.

The world media day will be observed by the universal Church on Sunday. Benedict XVI issued a message for the day titled "Children and the Media: A Challenge for Education."

In his message the Pope says, "The relationship of children, media and education can be considered from two perspectives: the formation of children by the media, and the formation of children to respond appropriately to the media."

### Responsibility

Archbishop Foley said: "All of us should know that everything we write, broadcast or telecast will have an effect on others -- and if some or many of those others are impressionable young people, what will that effect be?"

"Also, do we as communicators or do our schools help people -- especially young people - - to be intelligent and discerning consumers of the media?"

The president of the media council said that schools and the media themselves should give to young people the tools they need to understand the communication industry, such as the basics of writing a news story, and how radio and television news programs are put together.

He said young people should also be taught to understand television programs, and they should know that in commercial television "a suspenseful moment usually occurs right before the insertion of advertising, so that the viewer won't change the channel during the commercial break."

He said that although it's a difficult challenge, "it is essential so that we can have an enlightened citizenry, a healthy democracy and, I hope, a certain amount of spiritual idealism."

Above all," he added, "we want to see children who are enlightened by the media, not corrupted by them. May we all do our part!"