

Introduction to the Three Session Media Management Sequence

Rationale and Learning Pathway

For seminarians completing the Pastoral Communication and Media Formation course

During this course, you have entered several areas of communication that often appear as separate specialisations. You have worked with writing, photography, visual storytelling, video, editing, social media, algorithms, verification, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and digital wellness. Each area has introduced a language, a craft and a set of responsibilities. These skills are important because contemporary pastoral ministry takes place among people whose daily experience is deeply shaped by media. Yet technical familiarity alone does not prepare a future priest to lead communication well. The final question of the course is therefore larger than any particular tool: how will all these skills be brought together in the service of the Church's mission?

The three sessions that follow answer that question as a connected sequence. They move from Media Management for Mission, through Cross Media Convergence, to the practical planning and presentation of a pastoral media campaign. The sequence asks you to step back from individual products and see communication as a pastoral process. A poster, video, homily reference, WhatsApp message, website, registration form, personal invitation and follow-up conversation may all belong to the same ministry. Their value depends on whether they serve a clear purpose, respect the people involved and help the community move towards a meaningful response.

Mission decides the message The message guides the media The media work together in the service of communion

Why this sequence is necessary

The modern Church does not suffer from a complete absence of communication. Parishes, dioceses, seminaries and religious communities already use many channels. They announce programmes after Mass, circulate posters through messaging groups, publish photographs, stream celebrations, maintain websites and social pages, and depend on volunteers who can design or edit. The difficulty is often that these efforts remain disconnected. Different people publish different versions of the same information. Content is produced before the audience has been understood. A programme is advertised widely, but nobody is prepared to answer enquiries. An event receives online attention, yet no path leads from attention to participation or from participation to continuing community.

This fragmentation is not solved simply by producing more material. It requires leadership. Someone must help the pastoral team identify the real need, define the mission, listen to the people concerned, establish a trustworthy message, choose suitable forms of communication, coordinate responsibilities, protect dignity and evaluate what happened. In priestly ministry, that responsibility will often belong to the priest even when professionals and gifted lay collaborators undertake the creative work. He does not need to perform every task himself. He does need to understand the whole process well enough to guide it responsibly.

The rationale for these sessions is therefore pastoral rather than technological. They do not attempt to make every seminarian a full-time media professional. They prepare him to recognise communication as part of pastoral planning and to coordinate the gifts of a community around a shared mission. They also help him judge when a digital platform is useful, when a personal encounter is necessary, and how one form of communication should lead naturally to another.

Communication belongs within pastoral leadership

Every area of priestly ministry depends upon communication. Preaching, catechesis, counselling, administration, community building, crisis response, vocation promotion, youth ministry and social action all require people to receive, understand, trust and respond. The quality of communication can either strengthen or weaken the ministry itself. A confusing notice may discourage participation. An unanswered message may communicate indifference. An unverified claim may damage trust. A respectful correction may restore it. A thoughtful personal invitation may reach someone whom a public announcement will never reach.

The Church's understanding of communication also reaches beyond the transfer of information. *Communio et Progressio* places communication within the human vocation to relationship, unity and communion. Christ communicates by drawing people into truth and relationship, not by transmitting detached information. This perspective gives the course its pastoral standard. We must ask whether our communication is accurate and effective, but we must also ask what kind of relationship it creates. Does it listen? Does it respect freedom? Does it make participation possible? Does it include those who are easily overlooked? Does it strengthen the embodied community rather than leaving people as spectators?

This vision is especially important in a media environment that rewards speed, visibility and constant production. These qualities may have practical value, but they cannot determine the Church's purpose. The Church communicates to serve persons and communities. Visibility becomes useful only when it helps a real person notice, understand, trust, respond, participate and grow in belonging.

The movement from skill to stewardship

The wider course has introduced the seminarian to the work of the communicator. These final sessions introduce the responsibility of the pastoral steward. The difference is significant. A creator asks how to make a good photograph, video, article or design. A pastoral media manager asks why that item is needed, whom it should serve, what role it performs, how it relates to other forms of

communication, who must approve it, how responses will be handled and what outcome will show that it served the mission.

Stewardship does not diminish creativity. It gives creativity a worthy direction. When mission and audience are clear, writers, designers, photographers, filmmakers and digital volunteers can work with greater freedom because they understand the purpose they share. Coordination also protects their work from preventable confusion. Facts can be verified once, responsibilities can be assigned, consent can be recorded, deadlines can be realistic, and the team can maintain one authoritative source of information.

The Guide to the Training of Future Priests concerning the Instruments of Social Communication asks that future priests understand media languages, audiences and practical communication. That formation is needed because a priest will often guide people who possess skills different from his own. Good leadership recognises those gifts, invites collaboration and establishes the pastoral and ethical frame within which they can serve.

The three movements of the learning journey

Session One Discern

Media Management for Mission begins with discernment. It asks the team to resist the habit of starting with a platform or product. Instead, it begins with the pastoral situation and the people whom the Church hopes to serve. The Five Ms provide the organising framework: Mission, Message, Media, Management and Measurement. Mission names the pastoral good being sought. Message identifies the meaning and response at the centre of the communication. Media are chosen according to the people and purpose. Management coordinates people, time, resources, truth, approval and response. Measurement asks whether the communication produced pastoral fruit rather than visibility alone.

This first movement also introduces the communication audit and the resource inventory. Before opening a new account or purchasing new equipment, the pastoral leader examines the communication environment that already exists. Trusted people, liturgical gatherings, parish groups, schools, local networks, telephones, noticeboards and personal visits may be as important as digital channels. Discernment prevents technology from defining the mission.

Session Two Design

Cross Media Convergence moves from discernment to design. It distinguishes between placing the same content on several platforms and giving different media distinct but connected work. A poster may create recognition. A testimony may build trust. A website or parish office may provide complete and corrected information. A message from a known person may invite response. A gathering may create participation. Follow-up may support belonging. The campaign becomes coherent when these forms lead from one meaningful step to the next.

The audience journey offers a practical way to design these transitions: Notice, Understand, Trust, Respond, Participate, Belong and Share. The stages are not a rigid funnel, but they reveal gaps. A campaign may create attention without clarity, registration without welcome, or attendance without follow-up. Convergence asks what each medium should enable and how the next relationship will begin.

Session Three Deploy and Present

The final session turns the earlier principles into decisions. Working with a concrete pastoral brief, each group defines the need, mission, audience, insight, objective, core message, call to action, media journey, responsibilities, safeguards and measures. The group then presents the campaign as a chain of pastoral choices rather than a list of content ideas. The workbook makes visible the planning that must happen before production begins.

The practical exercise also introduces accountability. A credible proposal names who will coordinate the campaign, who will verify facts, who will approve sensitive material, who will answer enquiries, how accessibility and safeguarding will be addressed, and what the team will learn from the result. Deployment means more than publishing. It includes response, correction, accompaniment, evaluation and the next relationship.

What the sequence should form

By the end of the three sessions, the participant should be able to look at a pastoral initiative and ask better questions before suggesting content. He should be able to distinguish a communication need from a desire for publicity, define a usable objective, recognise the primary audience, shape a coherent message, choose only the media that perform necessary work and connect those media into an accessible journey. He should also be able to organise collaboration, identify ethical risks, maintain verified information and evaluate both media activity and pastoral outcomes.

The deeper outcome is a habit of pastoral attention. Good communication begins by noticing people and listening to their situation. It respects the difference between speaking about people and communicating with them. It avoids treating audiences as numbers and volunteers as a free production service. It gives technology a proper place within a larger ministry of encounter, accompaniment and communion.

How to enter the sessions

Approach these sessions with a real pastoral setting in mind. Think of a parish event that received little response, a message that created confusion, a group that is regularly missed, a website that people do not trust, or a programme that ended without follow-up. The purpose is not to criticise past efforts. It is to learn how better planning could make the ministry clearer, more truthful, more inclusive and more responsive.

During the exercises, allow the mission and audience to challenge your personal media preferences. The platform you know best may not be the one that the intended community needs. The most

attractive content may not perform the most important pastoral task. A modest plan that reaches the right people and sustains a real response may serve the mission better than a highly visible campaign that leaves no continuing relationship.

These sessions therefore invite a change of perspective. We are moving from individual media skills to coordinated pastoral communication, from content production to stewardship, and from isolated visibility to a journey of encounter and participation. The work begins with mission, remains attentive to people and reaches its proper fulfilment when communication strengthens communion.

References for Further Study

Pontifical Commission for Social Communications *Communio et Progressio* 1971. Presents communication as service to truth, human unity, relationship and communion. [Official text](#)

Pontifical Council for Social Communications *Aetatis Novae* 1992. Calls for communication to be integrated into pastoral planning and coordinated according to local needs and resources. [Official text](#)

Congregation for Catholic Education *Guide to the Training of Future Priests concerning the Instruments of Social Communication* 1986. Supports communication formation that combines critical understanding, knowledge of audiences and media languages, and practical experience. [Official text](#)

Dicastery for Communication *Towards Full Presence* 2023. Explores listening, participation, community and the relationship between digital communication and embodied encounter. [Official text](#)