

Making it real: Genuine human encounter in our digital world

Anne O'Brien, Director of Mission Integration writes about keeping it real in digital world.

Little did the Australian Catholic Bishops know that when planning the Social Justice statement for 2019-2020 we would be living in a time where our only connections are through the digital world. The COVID19 pandemic has affected society cross the globe and drawn us to a situation, which is beyond our imagination.

COVID19 has heightened the need for us all to be aware of the importance of digital citizenship and the opportunities of digital encounters. If we consider the leadership in our Diocese with many priests availing everyone with the opportunity to stay connected to their faith with online spiritual nourishment and our Bishop providing a beautiful Sunday mass for all in our Diocese to share and be connected.

I share the link to the document stating "[Ten Steps Towards a Genuine Human Encounter](#)" for us all to consider.

We are called to be citizens of the digital world

As Christians, we are called to 'boldly become citizens of the digital world', with the image of the Good Samaritan as our inspiration. We are called not only to love our neighbour, but to bring the love of God to the new global neighbourhood.

We all have a role to play in making this a space where hatred, divisions and falsehoods are rejected. Let's foster a neighbourhood promoting those attributes and social values that lend themselves to genuine human encounter – love, understanding, beauty, goodness, truth and trustworthiness, joy and hope.

Lord, make us instruments of your peace

Help us to recognise the evil latent in a communication that does not build communion.

Help us to remove the venom from our judgements.

Help us to speak about others as our brothers and sisters.

You are faithful and trustworthy; may our words be seeds of goodness for the world:

*where there is shouting, let us practise listening;
where there is confusion, let us inspire harmony;
where there is ambiguity, let us bring clarity;
where there is exclusion, let us offer solidarity;
where there is sensationalism, let us use sobriety;
where there is superficiality, let us raise real questions;
where there is prejudice, let us awaken trust;
where there is hostility, let us bring respect;
where there is falsehood, let us bring truth.*

Amen.

*- A Prayer from Pope Francis, 2018
Message for the 52nd World Communications Day*