

Public Abstract

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A dominate discourse in understanding the relationship between religion and media has been one of competition. This discourse of competition posits that the relationship between religion and media, in Western societies, is inherently competitive. Fueled, in part, by the rapid advancement of mass media technology in the middle of the twentieth-century, which fundamentally altered the social relations among individuals and has still yet to be fully understood, media and religion are shown to be at odds with one another. However, the Roman Catholic Church actively engages media and employs it as part of their religious dialogue with the broader societies in which they are embedded. With recent calls by the pope for Catholics to further engage media these seemingly contradictory phenomena show a need for better articulation and examination of the relationship between the Romance Catholic Church and media. Using an ethnographic content analysis to examine a number of the Catholic documents this study aims to better understand how the Church constructs its relationship with media. As there have been no empirically based, comprehensive, examinations of how the Church engages media post-Vatican II, this study aims to understand how the Church uses and understands media in the second half of the twentieth century. This study identifies numerous themes within a number of frames outlined by the Church by examining official documents, which help to understand how the Church constructs its relationship with media. Further, a dialectical discourse - informing in order to form - develops throughout the data as the Church engages media.