

INFORMING IN ORDER TO FORM: THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

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 is inherently competitive. 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. These seemingly contradictory phenomena are in need of better articulation and examination. 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 does so post-Vatican II, this study aims to understand how the Church uses and understands media in the second half of the twentieth century. A dialectical discourse of “informing in order to form” develops throughout the data as the Church engages media.