



Maciej Radej


 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0127-7875>

 maciej.radej@upjp2.edu.pl

The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow

 <https://ror.org/0583g9182>

The media in the face of truth: speaking, listening, and conversion

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Abstract

The media in the face of truth: speaking, listening, and conversion

The article reflects on truth as a fundamental criterion for the functioning of the mass media. In the face of contemporary fascination with pluralism and fragmentariness, the oneness of truth is recalled, which has the power to integrate dispersed collectivities. The text distinguishes between “true speech” (language that does not falsify reality) and “spoken truth” (disclosure of truth in the communication space). It also points out the necessity of active and wise listening to truth, engaging the whole person and protecting against manipulation and illusions. The ultimate goal of the recipient’s interaction with the media should be conversion (metanoia) to truth, consisting of abandoning untruths and building the ability to distinguish between good and evil. A complete turn towards truth constitutes a media conversion, protecting human dignity and guaranteeing true freedom.

Keywords: truth in the media, oneness of truth, true speech, listening to truth, media conversion, social communication

Invariably, truth remains the most vital criterion in cognition, judgement, interpersonal relations, and choice-making. It is also the sense and fulcrum for the functioning of the mass media. Reflection on truth inevitably leads to the perception of the imperative of truth which is directed towards people, calls up to them, and turns to them as well as examines, evaluates, interrupts, and interferes with human activity. Indeed, it is incorrect to discuss the contemporary crisis of truth: what should be discussed is rather the crisis in man’s attitude towards truth. Truth, regardless of the criterion of the conditions in which an individual lives, can fulfil a unifying and integrative function. Truth eliminates suspicion and thus may facilitate the consolidation of loose collectivities of people who are distrustful towards each other and separate in the media space. Projecting truth onto a large screen has a strong impact on the projection of the expanded network of human interrelations and exchange of information based on the ultimate value, namely truth. Given the risk of truth being ideologised, contemporary media users need to be constantly reminded of the crucial issues related to the criterion of cognising reality. In the milieu of fragmented information, they deserve answers to the following questions: Does any person have their own truth?

And if so, are there many truths or only one? What is the difference between true speech and spoken truth? What does it mean to heed truth and to be captivated by truth? What would it mean for the media to convert to truth? These important matters shall be discussed in this article.

One truth or a plurality of truths?

Nowadays, people are fascinated with optionality, plurality, fragmentariness, and dispersion, which stand in contrast to the singularity and unity of knowing the truth. Today's digital media are a window through which the users can look into the pieces of content they seek. We must realise that plurality is not a source of unity; on the contrary, it is unity that is the source of plurality. To a speculative mind, the singularity of truth is perfection. The adjective "singular" describing truth denies the possibility that many truths may co-exist; the number "one" is used for quantitative organisation and for describing the relations towards the existent order. The starting point is the recognition of the oneness of truth, which stands behind the order of things and allows us to determine relations between them (Heschel, 1951, pp. 111–112).

Anything in plurality is related to singularity. It can be shown mathematically (e.g. as $\text{♣} + \text{♣} = \text{♣}$ or $\text{♣} + \text{♣} + \text{♣} = \text{♣}$ etc.). Any variant of a formula, even when it includes multiplicities, has a starting point in the number "one" (♣). The left side of the equation has to correspond to the value of its right side. When different people meet and each of them expresses the truth, they relate to its oneness. The solutions and the results of the search are just what they are, they can neither be supplemented by anything, nor detracted from. A human person, although real, is not truth. Truth exists regardless of individuals. Man is a witness to truth, which he draws from an independent source. Therefore, the need for independent media results from truth. Whatever is true is correspondent. In my mathematical example both sides of the equation are correspondent, that is their value is exactly the same, neither higher nor lower. It is what it is. We should oppose views that negate and reject the oneness of truth. When the number "one" is reduced to 0.99 or even 0, this reduction means rejecting truth, making up fiction, and dismissing the laws of logic.

The multiplication of the number of truths can be best explained on the example of ice calving. When blocks of ice break away from a glacier, each

of them becomes a separate unit, has its own autonomy and structure, and begins to function in a new way: it no longer belongs to a solid mass, instead, it starts to drift. The separated iceberg “forgets” its source and the origin of its existence. It lives independently, just as the other disconnected chunks. However, the parts do not form a whole any more, neither are they larger than the whole. One piece of a jigsaw puzzle is just a tiny element in a bigger picture. It is only the whole, the unity of all the elements of the picture, that makes it possible for us to see the actual state of affairs. Thus the number “one” stands for the privileged position of truth and shows its uniqueness. The essence of truth is more than an individual is able to learn or express. That’s why the task of the media is to make effort to reach the source of truth, namely to present such content that provokes the ultimate, primary questions. Irrelevant or secondary content cannot be misrepresented as that of primary importance. Regrettably, many broadcasters offer trivial and immaterial information as deserving of close attention of the general public. Consequently, both the media and their users are threatened by a loss of their own identity as well as a loss of identification with what is really important in favour of banal and commonplace topics. The users face the risk of petrification, due to which inflexible and rigid forms become permanent (Dictionary Cambridge).¹

When individualism is upheld and when blocks of information that got detached from truth are considered truthful, it becomes difficult to understand the whole; indeed, one is inclined to believe ever more strongly that there does not exist one truth. Everybody has their own truth so ideally they should stick to their own judgement and opinion. A drifting ice floe moves randomly and does not plan its course; similarly, media users get disorientated and do not know which direction to take, and so they may find themselves on a collision course and bump into another drifting object. Also, they may collide with the wholeness and unity of truth, which can never be appropriated. So when we ask how many truths there are or even when we experience a plurality of truths, a fragmentation of truth, we are still aware that the fragments belong to one whole. Truth is one. It has the power to unite pluralities and to build a comprehensive picture of the world. Those operations performed by the media that are motivated by truth become empowered to bring about

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1 See also: *Słownik języka polskiego, Petryfikacja*, <https://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/petryfikacja;2499539.html> (access: 16.02.2024).

a unity and to bring people together. Those who present various concepts of truth often forget that they do not produce truth, but only conceptualise it, namely they make certain observations, approach it in certain ways, express their thoughts and their own ideas. So it should be remembered that concepts can be both true and false. Our duty is to follow truth and this concept of truth that resides within it. Then we can talk about concepts as products of conception, as something conceived by truth. A concept understood as a product of intellect is not necessarily something conceived by truth. The media frequently get influenced by opinions and propagate content that stems from somebody's observations, but they should not forget the concept of autonomous truth, which is conceived at source. The source of truth is truth itself, and not concepts of truth. Those concepts can be true if conceived by truth as such. It must be noted that a human person is right whenever he or she is not at fault. The thing that never is at fault is truth. Similarly, the media are correct when they are not at fault. Therefore, as remarked by Pope Benedict XVI, the interest in and popularity of many publications, programmes, and quality films depend on their recognition and appropriate presentation of truth (Benedict XVI, 2008). So there is an urgent need to tell the truth.

True speech and spoken truth

Human cognition, also informative cognition, is getting more and more refined. The means of communication present their arguments in a more and more systematic and precise way, owing to which users can acquire information that facilitates the development of creative thinking. In the initial phase, while absorbing the offered content, users may not experience a cognitive revelation, because they are led and guided by the provider of the information. But when a personal discovery occurs, a new phase in the cognition process begins, when the intellect is properly applied and contemplates the *speculabile*, thanks to which mankind can better understand the world. This means that the media are carriers of what becomes visible to the human mind due to the ability to think, analyse, and draw conclusions. *Recta ratio speculabile* (Krańpiec, 1974, p. 188). The message of truth is, therefore, crucial for reasoning and discerning basic cognitive content. Also, the ethical principles to which a human person adheres have to be taken into account, because undertaking any action is always a moral decision. Thus, truth can never be

excluded from the domain of axiology, because truth is a basic criterion in assigning value. Nowadays, communication aimed at spreading information requires special competence, language skills, and the ability to use language in social situations (Szalkowska, 2009, p. 372).

There is a fundamental difference between “true speech” and “spoken truth.” In the former phrase, whether we want it or not, the main role is played by the noun “speech,” whereas truth is only referred to in the modifier. In the latter case, the focus is truth, while the modifier specifies that speech, i.e. language, is the medium. It happens so because truth cannot accept falsehood, it always takes the opposite position. On the other hand, speech (or language), which does not enjoy its own sovereignty and self-determination, unlike truth, may be susceptible to falsehood. Decisions are not made in language, but in man. Hence the importance of the “truth of being.” True speech refers to the language of communication which is present in the media. It is revealed in the specific acts of using the language system. It includes signs and rules and fulfils various functions (e.g. communicative, expressive, regulatory), and its purpose is to send and receive messages.

In 1861 the French surgeon and anthropologist Pierre Paul Broca (1824–1880) discovered the seat of speech production in the brain. It has an important role in understanding language and interpreting gestures (Fadiga & Craighero, 2006, p. 488). The latest experiments demonstrate that Broca’s area becomes active when sentences are uttered concerning cognition and perception. That is significant, because the word and the gesture are inter-related at the level of purpose and intention (Gentilucci, Bernardis, Crisi, & Dalla Volta, 2006, p. 1063). For language signifies not only through written or spoken messages, but also through gestures and facial expression. Utterances can be produced without words, with other signs exclusively, therefore communication can take on many forms of expression and use various channels. So, true speech in the media is such language of communication (involving signs, gestures, symbols, oral and written utterances) that does not falsify the reality, does not simplify meanings, and does not reduce or distort the sense. It is correspondent with correct thinking and values. Such messages in dialogic communication show positive attitudes of senders and receivers. One should acknowledge the proposition of the Jewish mathematician and philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), one of the founders of phenomenology, that we should distinguish between two types of signs: indications and meaningful speech expressions. Even if one speaks to another person

intending to communicate something, the gestures and the look on one's face do not count as expressions, because they accompany speech unwittingly, without any intention to communicate anything (Husserl, 1970, p. 269).

The author of the book *Komunikacja językowa w Internecie* [Language communication on the internet], linguist Jan Grzenia, observes that the Internet presents all the functions of language that we know from real-world communication, but the relations to both written and spoken language are altered: all internet texts are digital, that is non-spoken, even though they display some features of orality; neither are they identical with written texts, although they are based on writing (Grzenia, 2008, p. 183). However, linguistic changes and diversification should always belong to true speech, that is to correspond with the reality.

In the context of true speech, the Greek term *παρρησία* (*parrhesia*) needs to be discussed. Literally it denotes “speaking everything,” speaking freely, candid and lucid speech which is based on truth. *Parrhesia* is the opposite of artificial rhetoric, it is speaking directly to one's equals, among equals. Nevertheless, it can have a negative aspect when the listener is openly hurt or offended by the speaker telling the truth. On the positive side, *parrhesia* is an act of courage and an expression of what the speaker believes to be true (PWN, n.d., *Parezja*).² In the agora of today's media, *parrhesia* characterises a conscientious citizen who demands the truth. So the users ought to be interested not only in surfing the net and scanning various websites, but also, in proportion and parallelly, in *parrhesia*, which has become a necessity. Practicing *parrhesia* should be typical of users of the social communication media, treating each other with respect and striving to attain their common aim, that is good.

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2 See also *Parezja*, <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parezja> and the English version of this entry: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parrhesia> (access: 10.02.2024). “*Parrhesia* is closely tied to having the courage to speak the truth despite potential dangers, including social repercussions, political scandal, or even matters of life and death. *Parrhesia* involves speaking openly. This involves a distinct connection to truth via honesty, a link to personal life through facing danger, a certain interaction with oneself or others through critique, and a specific relationship with moral principles through freedom and responsibility. Specifically, it's a form of speaking where the speaker shares their personal truth, even risking their life because they believe truth-telling is a duty to help others and themselves. In *parrhesia*, the speaker opts for honesty over persuasion, truth over falsehood or silence, the risk of death over safety, criticism over flattery, and moral obligation over self-interest or indifference. The *parrhesiastes* speaks without reservation.”

The idea of open, candid, and lucid speech in the means of communication can be traced back to Protagoras of Abdera (ca. 480 BC–410 BC), who thought that men should be frank with one another and instruct one another “and not be begrudging [anyone else] this [instruction], as now no one begrudges [teaching others] things just and lawful.”³ Users of the media should be sincere in order to share truth. Whatever has been comprehended by one person should be shared with others, without begrudging or envying, so as to build the unity and brotherhood in the mediasphere. When users are “speaking and listening in their turn in an orderly manner” (Plato, 2010, p. 90–91), a propitious communication milieu is created in which truth is not only uttered (and discovered), but also heard (and discovered too), it is listened to attentively and reflected upon. The phrase “spoken truth” is directly related to the disclosure of truth in the communication space. It is in speech (i.e. language) that truth is expressed and expresses itself.

Marshall McLuhan (1911–1980), a Canadian philosopher and one of the best theorists of mass communication and the media, stressed that speech allows truth to emerge, serves to separate one person from another, and separate man from the animal world (McLuhan, 1964, pp. 77–80). A similar opinion was expressed by the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859–1941). In his work *Creative evolution* he said that “without language, intelligence would probably have remained riveted to the material objects which it was interested in considering” (Bergson, 1911, p. 258).⁴ The dialogical nature of truth, and especially its correlatedness to values, indicate that truth should be speaking towards good. So from the perspective of a person and the media, true speech and spoken truth are important elements of the message. It is not only the communicated content that is important, but also the way of communicating it. Both support the media message, make it possible to learn the truth, and perform the ordering and integrative function for the person. It is not only speaking the truth, but also listening to the truth that becomes a necessity.

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3 Protagoras (Πρωταγόρας ὁ Ἀβδηρίτης) was a Greek philosopher, one of the Sophists. The quotation comes from Plato, 2010, p. 62.

4 Bergson perceived the need of the “language of the understanding” (p. 281): “we must adopt the language of the understanding, since only the understanding has a language.”

Listening to truth and being captivated by truth

Colloquial language allows several collocations of the word “truth,” such as “objective truth,” “empirical truth,” “bitter truth,” “painful truth,” “unpalatable truth,” “naked truth;” we can even be tempted to “taste the truth.” There is a genuine risk that truth may be viewed as something that can be grasped rationally or sensorially. Such an oversimplification would obviously be wrong. Truth relates to man holistically, including man’s reason, soul, and conscience, and its existence is independent of the organs thanks to which it can become known and communicated in the world. It is also to be noted that one should always listen wisely. Any of the senses that facilitate cognition require openness on the part of the individual.⁵ Those words that are not heard by anyone are uttered in vain. In media communication it is not only the message and the sender that are important, but also our way of listening to them. Any printed or spoken word, any image and sound leave their indelible trace in man’s mind. The above mentioned author of *Understanding media: Extensions of man* (first published in 1964), Marshall McLuhan rightly said that any new content turns the recipient into a new person. Changes in the pace, “scale and form of human association and action” change the participants of the communication process (McLuhan, 1964, p. 9).⁶ The truth that a person heard by interacting with the outside world needs to be acknowledged and comprehended innerly. The human auditory pathway has an external part, which leads to the inner ear.⁷ Truth is communicated to the whole man, not to his particular body members. The addressee of truth is the whole person,

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5 In order to taste something, one needs to open one’s mouth, in order to see something, one needs to open one’s eyes, in order to smell or hear something, one needs to have open nostrils and ears, and in order to examine something by touching, one needs to open the palms of one’s hands.

6 Similar observations and conclusions were reached by Neil Postman (1931–2003), a philosopher and media theorist, professor of the Chair of Culture and Social Communication at New York University as well as by Robert K. Logan (b. 1939), a well-known physicist, media ecologist, and researcher of the evolution of language. Other proponents of such views were Harold Innis (1894–1952), a Canadian professor of economy and author of pioneering books on the media and communication theory, who investigated the role of the media in shaping culture and civilisation, as well as Elizabeth Eisenstein (1923–2016), a historian researching the media and cultural changes within Western civilisation.

7 The ear is the organ of hearing. It consists of the outer, middle, and inner ear. When sound waves reach the middle ear, they are transformed into vibrations, which in turn are modulated as neural impulses. A concise description of the mammalian auditory passageway is included in Webster, 1994, pp. 1–22.

and not an arm, head or brain. The ear is a human organ, but a human is not an organ of the ear, a human is not an organ of the kidney etc.

Since listening is a transmission of content that comes from the outside, it requires assistance in the critical judgement of the received data. Not all the things heard by a human person are of value. The gossip media, which build up chains of gossip, do not necessarily tell the truth. Those who listen and succumb to tall stories may live an illusory life as one can have an illusory certainty about some content and events, based on listening to untrue and fabricated information.

In order to understand what it means to listen to truth, we should go to the source. The Latin term *audio* (Jougan, 1957, p. 59) has as many as five meanings. The first of them is to “hear, listen, get to know something,” so it stresses active hearing. One cannot forget that the contemporary media offer a special place where we can hear and obtain information, get acquainted with something or enquire about something or someone (PWN, n.d., Dowiedzieć się).

The Polish dictionary of synonyms, *Słownik synonimów*, includes an entry for the verb “dowiadywać się,” to enquire about something, which even more strongly points towards the engagement of those participating in communication in the process of listening. This process involves collecting, accumulating, and verifying information. The key factor in it is truth. Undoubtedly, learning through listening is more extensive when the senders and recipients are given new data or obtain them on their own, using the media, sometimes randomly (PWN, n.d., Dowiadywać się). The second meaning of *audio* refers to attentive listening and encouraging the listeners to delve into the offered content, interest and attitude of the listener towards the new information. Attentive learning is what really brings man closer to truth. The third meaning of *audio* focuses on hearing out, admitting, acknowledging, that is the result of listening and finding correspondence between what is said and what actually is. So the ultimate goal of listening is to find out what is right. Media communication hones the perception of the listeners when the right thing is truth. The fourth meaning of *audio* is to “be obedient, follow in somebody’s footsteps,” and indicates the tractability of the listener. Listening means submissiveness or permanent acceptance of the role of a student. It means being constantly willing to yield to guidance of truth. The purpose of listening is to develop the mature attitude of accepting the role of a student. One’s life cannot be steered by what one hears, especially if it is lies, fake news, and other

dangerous forms of manipulation. One's life should be steered and set on its proper course by truth. Lastly, the fifth meaning of *audio* is to "be heard, i.e. be important, have an opinion, gain fame," which is particularly significant in the context of the media. Truth should be broadcast, get across to the listeners, resound through the speakers. The stream of truth, reaching media users, makes it possible for them to form an opinion on a given matter. While listening, the recipients can learn how to assess the delivered material, pass judgement on an issue, voice their opinion, or be persuaded by the presented content. "The truth signal" on air should be heard and received by media users attentively, heedfully, alertly.

A crucial aspect is not only listening as an activity, but also the person of the listener. An *auditor* (Latin: hearer, pupil) is a person active in the media, who performs a special function in the mediasphere. For an *auditor* can be a person investigating a case and questioning the witnesses (Jougan, 1957, p. 60). This function is fulfilled by the listeners, viewers, readers, net surfers, and others who analyse the content, compile materials on an event, and seek explanations for particular problems. Then they carry out the function of listeners performing their proper role of students. Being open to truth has a vital impact on the ability to function well in the environment of the new media. Communication founded on truth results in stronger unity and fellowship of the media users and helps them to make choices whenever human freedom is to be executed. Good rapport with other people online, therefore, does not limit one's access to truth; instead, based on the autonomy of truth, it weaves a unique web of interpersonal relations. So for the listeners, truth is a filter that helps to distinguish between the right and wrong in building relations. Especially now, with the developing social media and active match-making (McKenna, 2008, p. 236) one needs to remember that listeners who are open to truth are also prone to create accounts that facilitate finding compatible online friends among real people.

The uniqueness of internet relations is true for any media users and their online activity. Notably, intelligent listening affects personal development and increases the effectiveness of communication, because listening to truth empowers one's thinking, improving one's ability to argue, justify, motivate, infer etc. It has to be underlined that as speech knows elliptical statements, so listening can be disturbed by imperfect reception. Such imperfections can stem from linguistic limitations and inaccuracies, but also from hastiness when media users do not listen to or read the presented information in full

and so deprive themselves of the final reward, namely the tagline. The Jewish philosopher and physician Maimonides (1135–1204) said that words are indispensable in the cognitive process, but they are absolutely necessary only when we want to communicate our ideas to others or to demonstrate that we understood those ideas (Maimonides, 1885, p. 10). Listening to truth should lead a human being to conversion.

Media converted to truth

Professor Leszek Kołakowski (1927–2009), Polish philosopher, observes that discovering the truth takes place during the process of conversion. It involves absolute certainty which is a product of detailed convictions and is not susceptible to any argumentation. Conversion gives answers to vital questions of human existence, moreover, it provides practical guidelines how to see the difference between good and evil and between proper and improper conduct (Kolakowski et al., 1991, pp. 121–122).

Through conversion one gains not simply truth, but total truth—at least in respect to all questions that are important, interesting, and significant to life. One gains not only criteria to distinguish right and wrong, but criteria that are beyond any doubt, that are not afflicted by any argument, that grant moral certitude to the convert (Kolakowski et al., 1991, p. 122).

Indifference, lack of zeal, and disloyalty towards truth cannot be called conversion, they are its reverse. Conversion starts from an individual encounter with truth “where truth is not just known but lived in; or, better, where one becomes truth” (Kolakowski et al., 1991, p. 124).

The term “conversion” needs to be applied in the environment of the media. In reference to truth, we need to talk about converted senders and recipients. Actually, the category of converted addressee is essential in the mass media of communication. The knowledge and interpretation of facts in regard to truth are to strengthen the voice of the public opinion and encourage social integration, improving human thinking, and shaping human conscience. Truth is not a weapon against man, only a weapon against falsehood and evil. To a great extent, the users’ individual activity in the media depends on their personal conversion. The mediasphere is the right place for one’s metanoia

(μετάνοια), a transformative change of mind, for a community of active media users becomes a guardian of truth and within it truth can crystallise. Media users all over the world experience the variety of information, so its common denominator ought to be truth.

Dwight Macdonald (1906–1982), an American writer and journalist, theorist and critic of mass culture, warned the general public against its threats. He said that mass culture is responsible for the greater and greater passivity of recipients in digital society. They are easily satisfied with any content, standards, and entertainment, which can be imposed on them (Macdonald, 1958, p. 264). Such an attitude does not inspire the effort of conversion, but instead fosters an indifferent stand (*neutrum*) towards truth. Ubiquitous variety is conducive to syncretism, in which truth has to sidestep and make way to the consumer's satisfaction. Low-brow entertainment provided by images, sounds, speech, and writing reduces man's existential quest to pleasure and has nothing to do with seeking the truth (Morin, 2005, p. 574).

Rev. Prof. Józef Tischner (1931–2000), in his sermon delivered on 15 April 1990, referred to the fact that people easily succumb to various misconceptions and illusions. He said that “[v]arious fallacies, prejudices, and lies are so deeply rooted in man that man is prevented from seeing things as they really are” (Tischner, 2009, p. 256).⁸ “So much effort and so much power is needed to cut through those illusions, prejudices, and lies—just to get at simple truth” (Tischner, 2009, p. 253). Tischner is aware of the difficulty of conversion, that is man's resistance to truth. Even though things may appear self-evident and the light of truth can reach every eye, and the sound of truth can reach every ear, people stick to their misconceptions and illusions (Tischner, 2009, p. 256). So there are illusions which the recipients are accustomed to and which bring profit to the broadcasters. They make up a sad picture of a reality in which mass communication is bereft of truth. Then a person becomes just a guinea pig to be experimented on using various means of communication. Using the media is like entering a cage in which the surfers' data are gathered and analysed. Tischner says that such practices, characterised by egoism and self-absorption, turn the creators of illusions oblivious to the cost and scale of those illusions. Conversion is a turn towards truth. “We depart from some untruth to turn towards truth” (Tischner, 2009, p. 258). Using the means

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8 All the quotations from this book are given in my translation.

of social communication is a great asset of mankind provided that it serves truth and leads to truth. Therefore a person participating in communication should be sure that whatever is provided by the media is true. A sound critical assessment is a prerequisite (Tischner, 2011, p. 218) then “you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32) (New Revised Standard Version—Catholic Edition).

In his encyclical *Redemptor hominis* of 4 March 1979, Pope John Paul II notes that these words contain a fundamental requirement as well as a warning, because only integrity in the face of truth can guarantee true freedom (John Paul II, 1979, section no. 12). There is no freedom in being liberated from the value of truth. No truth can become a person’s truth if it is not acknowledged so by this person’s freedom (John Paul II, 1979, section no. 19). An honest relationship with regard to truth in any domain is a crucial prerequisite of being present in the media when justice and social responsibility are taken into account. In his encyclical of 6 August 1993 which bears a telling title *Veritatis splendor* [The splendor of truth], John Paul II said that the conversion of the media largely depends not only on the good intentions of the publishers and receivers which are targeted at man’s real good, but also on acts. If a human act is in conflict with the good of truth and is not ordered to truth, it is unworthy of a human person. Fidelity to truth is binding *semper et pro semper*, which means that no exceptions are allowed (John Paul II, 1993, section no. 82).

Conclusion

The media are important instruments of social communication and the basic criterion in their operations is truth, not politeness or compromise. When the borderlines of values become blurred, more space is given to subjectivistic and relativistic concepts. Looking at values in the light of universalism and objectivism makes it possible for us to perceive the difficulty of correct interpretation. Faced with important issues regarding truth, it is to be assumed that in an environment dominated by fragmentary cognition the whole becomes the main point of reference. Though we experience a plurality of truths, there is only one truth. The media that are subjected to the operation of truth have the power to integrate and lead to truth. A spiker of truth is any person who not only shares some content, but does so responsibly. An integral

outlook on the message of truth is closely linked to the dignity of a human person. The Latin term *audio*, which directly relates to gathering, accumulating, and verifying information, points to the important role of truth in the means of communication. A precious experience among media users should be conversion to truth. Both in the cultural and religious dimension, this conversion is tantamount to abandoning illusions and helps media users to make a distinction between good and evil. The media conversion, however, cannot affect intellectual cognition exclusively; it ought to involve all human life integrally, including human conscience. Truth speaks to the whole man, therefore only truthful messages can absolutely guarantee that media users are as respected as they should be. A turn towards truth is always a media conversion.

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