

Catholics must repent for not sharing good news

VATICAN CITY – Catholics, and especially Catholic communicators, must ask forgiveness for the times they have failed to share God's love and compassion, said U.S. Archbishop John P. Foley.

"Certainly, it is necessary to identify the evils in society and warn people against them, but our major effort should be in proclaiming the knowledge and love of our merciful savior, Jesus Christ," said the archbishop, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications.

The archbishop made his remarks in a March 5 homily during the opening Mass of the council's annual plenary session at the Vatican.

Referring to the day's Lenten readings, Archbishop Foley asked council members to examine the ways they have failed to use modern media to spread the good news as well as ways they may have contributed to a public view of the church as a body that speaks mainly to condemn.

The archbishop said Pope Benedict XVI "has justly counseled us not to be seen as always saying 'no,' but to reflect – and to be seen to reflect – in our use of the media the mercy and compassion of Jesus Christ."

The good news and the good deeds undertaken by the church out of love for God and for other people need to be shared every bit as much as the church warnings about evil, he said.

The media are used successfully "to sell soap and automobiles and clothing and vacation experiences," he said.

But Christians, "who have the responsibility to proclaim the most important message in the history of the human race, have often lacked the imagination and the dedication to use the media well in making known the good news of Jesus Christ," the archbishop said.

Archbishop Foley prayed that Christian communicators would renew their commitment not only to share the good news of Christ through their programs and publications, “but may we also be perceived as being loving and merciful, following his example and, indeed, his mandate.”