

Popular bloggers contemplate if Internet brings Catholics together

I've been reflecting on some of the things Rocco Palmo, who runs the incredibly well-read Whispers in the Loggia, said during the bloggers panel at the Catholic Media Conference June 22 in Indianapolis.

Palmo, and later Deacon Greg Kandra of the very popular The Deacon's Bench, talks about some of the potholes of the new media and blogging in the 21st century. Palmo said that current tensions "are unlike anything I've seen this last eight years. I don't know if it's election year, I don't know if it's politics, I don't know if it's that people are tired and cranky. It could be any one of those things. I've seen people who I've been around for a long time, in a way that I've never seen them, almost primed to explode at the drop of a hat "

Palmo pondered if new media is bringing people together. It's kind of shocking concept: the Catholic blogosphere's most influential voices pondering if the body of Christ is being built up through their work.

Listen to Rocco Palmo talk about the concerns:

Deacon Greg Kandra said he entered the blogosphere because there weren't many deacon blogs and he didn't recognize the Catholic Church on the web. He said there was partisanship, bias and agendas.

"One of the things I wanted to impart is that it's a big church," he said. "And the body of Christ is huge. As I like to tell people, it's everybody from Mother Angelica to Madonna and everybody in-between. I wanted somehow to reflect that."

Two weeks ago, Deacon Greg suspended comments on his blog, possibly to the end of the summer, maybe forever. He said the comments were personal and sometimes

racist.

“It became exhausting dealing with it,” Deacon Greg said.

The Internet is known for having warring factions, particularly politically, but Deacon Greg wasn’t expecting a Catholic audience to have venom toward one another.

Perhaps most tellingly, he said: “Here it’s all Catholics sort of devouring each other. It’s a very sobering thing to watch and to puzzle over and wonder how to handle. As much as you want people to debate and discuss, you don’t want them to kill each other either.”

I want to step out of the way and let you listen to him explain his thought process in two audio files. When you’re done, I’m wondering if you’d comment on your own view of the Catholic blogosphere and the commenters inside of it. Are Catholics coming together on the Internet or are we following American political lines and going our separate ways?

Where do you go online to feel the Catholic Church united?

Listen to Deacon Greg Kandra’s thoughts on blog comments: