

Marc CARROGGIO - Brian FINNERTY - Juan Manuel MORA, *Three Years with The Da Vinci Code*, in Juan Manuel MORA - Diego CONTRERAS - Marc CARROGGIO (a cura di), *Direzione strategica della comunicazione nella Chiesa. Nuove sfide, nuove proposte. Atti del 5° Seminario professionale sugli uffici comunicazione della Chiesa*, Roma, Edusc, 2007, pp. 209-221.

The fifth *Seminario Professionale*, a seminar organized by the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, has centered on the management aspect of the Communications Offices in the Church. The publication of the seminar's proceedings summarized it as follows: "the effectiveness of a communications department depends to a large extent on proper management, in other words on the competency of the people whose responsibility it is to identify short- and long-term objectives, to decide upon method, to exploit resources to the full, and to establish relationships which help to achieve the goal" (p. 13).

This publication brings together the full texts of both the presentations and the papers delivered during the seminar, covering a wide range of topics, events and geographical settings. This review looks specifically at *Three years with "The Da Vinci Code"*, the joint presentation by Marc Carroggio, Brian Finnerty and Juan Manuel Mora of the Communications Offices of the Prelature of Opus Dei in New York and Rome.

The presentation covers, in chronological order, the action of the Communications Offices of Opus Dei during three years, beginning with 2003, when the New York Office first became aware of the *The Da Vinci Code* just weeks before its publication, until 2006, with the period leading up to the presentation of the film based on the novel, in Cannes on May 17, 2006.

The predictions declaring that the book would not sell due to the absurdity of its argument were inaccurate; despite such negative literary criticism, several million copies of the book were sold. Encouraged by the novel's success, Sony Pictures bought the rights, produced the film and promoted it with one of the greatest marketing budgets in cinema history.

The first phase of the action plan of the New York Office was to ignore the book as much as possible. The Communications Office replied to all media inquiries avoiding overreacting so as to not attract any more attention to the novel. The next step was to pursue direct dialogue with Sony who gave vague responses to the proposals for respect and request of keeping certain themes and aspects of the novel from appearing in the film.

This gave rise to a fresh scenario and a new strategy. On January 10, 2006, at a meeting in Rome of the staff of the Communications Offices of Opus Dei in New York, London, Paris, Madrid, Cologne, Lagos and Montreal, a new strategy was presented. The strategy, described as "turning lemons into lemonade", had the following objectives: the dissemination of information about the reality of Jesus Christ and of

the Church, and in this context of Opus Dei; and to give to Sony a new opportunity of contributing to harmony with a gesture of respect towards religious beliefs.

The article, with exhaustive detail, describes the working system for transmitting the Christian point of view to the public at large, the people involved the media, the people who reacted, etc. Next, a provisional balance sheet is drawn up with the results obtained from the multiple initiatives. The conclusions reflect the suggestion of the prelate of Opus Dei who on learning of the strategy of the three “P”s –*positive*, *professional* and *polite*– recommended the addition of a fourth “P” for *patience*.

Nowadays, as stated in the presentation of the seminar’s proceedings, the Communications departments are not just transmitters of information, press releases, and official statements. Their function is not confined to the repetition of ancient journalistic rites. The new scenarios of communication force the departments to become sources of ideas, project laboratories, relations centers, platforms for dialogue. All of the above is reflected in the large variety of experiences brought together in this volume of which only one article is presented here.

Mercedes Alonso de Diego

Guillaume DERVILLE, *Praying 15 Days with St. Josemaría Escrivá*. Trans. from the French by James Socias. Woodridge (IL): Midwest Theological Forum, 2007, xv-64 pp. First edition: Guillaume DERVILLE, *Prier 15 jours avec Josémaría Escrivá*, Montrouge, Nouvelle Cité, 2001, 127 pp.

Taking as his point of departure two of St. Josemaría’s ideas his wish that everyone may seek, find and love Christ, and praying by imaginatively entering the Gospel scenes as one more character, Derville’s book takes fifteen of those scenes and shows us how to pray within and through them. As he explains, “in these contemplations, the Word of God will speak and invite us to follow Christ” (xi). Centering on specific characters—Mary, John the Baptist, the Shepherds and Wise Men, the Samaritan Woman, Sts. Lazarus, Mary and Martha, the Pagan who had faith, Pilate, Herod, and the Disciples of Emmaus, among others—the author develops 2-3 page meditations on the encounters of these persons with Jesus, blending quotations from the Gospel and, St. Josemaría’s writings with his own explanations.

The central recurring theme is love; indeed, the word “love” appears in all of the chapter titles. “This”, the author states, “is holiness: responding, day after day, to a call addressed to everyone; a call of love that is both urgent and divine” (xi). Derville stresses how St. Josemaría explained that “to read the life of Christ is to immerse oneself in love and, with him, to *passionately love the world*” (xii). For this reason, in all the meditations proposed, the author centers not only on the spiritual aspect of the encounter with Christ, but also on how this meeting evolves into a “concerto of ordinary life in which God’s voice is the principal instrument to which his children, the