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Priest Answers the Holy Father's Call to Go Forth and Blog

Fr. Robert Barron and WordOnFire.org Spread the Message of Faith

CHICAGO, Jan. 25 – In a Jan. 23 statement, Pope Benedict XVI called priests around the world to operate Web sites and blogs in order to participate in social media communications. The Holy Father also revealed the theme for the annual World Communications Day on May 16, “New Media at the service of the Word.” Fr. Robert Barron of Chicago has answered the Pope’s call — he already embraces new media with his apostolate Word On Fire Catholic Ministries.

Fr. Barron, one of the world’s great and innovative teachers of Catholicism, founded Word On Fire, a global media organization, in hopes of attracting millions into or back to the Catholic faith through his vibrant sermons and comprehensive online resources. Chicago’s Francis Cardinal George calls Barron one of the Church’s best messengers and now the priest from the Archdiocese of Chicago is harnessing today’s technology to evangelize the culture.

“The spread of multimedia communications and its rich ‘menu of options’ might make us think it sufficient simply to be present on the Web,” the Holy Father said. But priests are *“challenged to proclaim the Gospel by employing the latest generation of audiovisual resources.”*

At the hub of Word On Fire is an interactive Web site (www.WordOnFire.org), which uses the most cutting-edge resources to reach out to people across the globe: YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, podcasts, and RSS Feed. Fr. Barron is preparing to re-launch his blog in the coming weeks. Word On Fire also produces written resources such as articles and books as well as CDs and DVDs. It is through all these formats that Fr. Barron reaches out to the world, encouraging participants to be active in their faith by broadening their understanding and depth of the Church’s teachings. The Web site was originally launched in 1999 and currently draws more than 500,000 visitors each year from every continent.

“Pope Benedict is a man after my own heart,” Fr. Barron said. *“Even at 82 years old, the pontiff knows that we need to speak the language of our time to effectively spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have engaged thousands of people in dialogue about the Christian Faith through the rich ‘menu of options’ the pope describes: YouTube videos, Facebook, Twitter, weekly audio sermons and our fully interactive Web site. I am also re-launching my blog so that I am able to connect with people in a more personal way.”*

Additionally, Word On Fire, led by Fr. Robert Barron, is filming an epic 10-part documentary which will take viewers deep into the rich heritage of the Catholic Church across the world. Filmed in high-definition video in 15 countries and 30 locations, it will make the beauty of the Church seem new again. The CATHOLICISM Project will explore, through a global journey, the living faith of the Catholic Church by visiting sites on every continent that have enriched our culture. Through his journeys, Fr. Barron explains what Catholics believe and why — using art, architecture, literature, music and all the riches of the Catholic tradition to tell a visually arresting and inspiring story.

Supporters can participate in an in-depth virtual pilgrimage found on Word On Fire’s Web site. The new and improved Virtual pilgrimage will be launched in the spring and will include a team blog, where the producers, editor and other filmmakers from The Catholicism Project can tell stories of the trip. It will also include behind the scenes footage and video and audio postcards from Fr. Barron. Additionally, users can participate in a group forum, where they can interact directly with Fr. Barron and the Word On Fire team, sharing pictures and videos from their trips to the same locations in order to become part of the story in a fully-interactive way.

Fr. Barron is the Director of Word on Fire and is the Francis Cardinal George Professor of Faith and Culture at The University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary. He is available for interviews. Please contact Christine Schicker with The Maximus Group at 404-610-8871.

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