

# Social media should be used to evangelize, says Catholic author and radio host Patrick Madrid

People are “more or less addicted to their cell phones,” says Patrick Madrid, a Catholic author and radio host, but social media can be harnessed to effectively evangelize.

Madrid was one of eight headline Catholic speakers at the New Evangelization Summit in Ottawa Apr. 27-28 that drew several hundred to the main site, and several thousand through more than 40 host sites around the world.

Though many cradle Catholics lose their faith once they attend university, Madrid said, parents can use their phones to send video clips to their son or daughter.

“They will listen,” he said, though he added, “Don’t bombard them.”

“Let’s say someone you know truly believes the atheist arguments are persuasive, let them watch” a Catholic debate an atheist on YouTube.,” he said. “If you text a YouTube link, especially to a young person, they will watch it.”

He suggested writing something like this: “I saw this atheist debating, he was trying to disprove belief in God. Check this out.”

Not only is there a wealth of great debates on YouTube, there are many digital downloads from good Catholic sites available that can also be sent to friends and relatives via internet links, he said.

Madrid said he also uses Twitter and Facebook to evangelize and spark debate. “It happens to me all the time on Twitter,” he said. “All kinds of things tend to erupt. It gets people thinking.”

He urged people to “season” their social media posts with links to interesting videos and articles.

Catholics can also listen to apologetics on the radio such as his on Relevant Radio, he said. Apologetics is “not arguing.”

“It is simply friendly charitable patient explanation of why you believe what you believe,” he said. Listening to apologetics programs can help equip you to avoid walking away or getting into an argument, he said.

"On the radio show you will hear how to do that, will hear the arguments, but hear how to respond to arguments without getting angry or in a way that will drive people away," he said. He suggested the [Catholic Answers](#) website is a great resource for answering questions about the faith.

Kicking off the Summit on Apr. 27, Fr. Mark Goring, a priest of the Companions of the Cross and director of the Catholic Charismatic Centre in Houston offered advice on how to be "unstoppable" because "if God is for us, who can be against us?"

Fr. Goring urged believers to seek a "personal Pentecost," through the power of the Holy Spirit. "God wants you to be on fire with the Holy Spirit. As for Him to fill you. Give Him permission to do whatever he wants."

Discover your "charism," or "what you are made to do," he said. These gifts of the Holy Spirit are different from natural gifts. "When you are working in your charism, it's easy," he said.

The graces of God need to be renewed every day, Goring said. "You should get up early in the morning and seek God's face, rest in His arms, read God's word, drink in the Spirit."

"Yesterday's graces don't work," he said. "We need fresh wisdom today; fresh love today; fresh graces today."

Curtis Martin, founder of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) and author of Made for More, also focused on the need for the fire of the Holy Spirit so Catholics and "sail" rather than "row" when it comes "navigating the Christian life."

Being in a loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ "becomes an adventure and a source of energy and life," he said.

"As a Church we skip this, we assume this," he said. People are "sacramentalized, but they also need to be evangelized."

Martin also stressed making Jesus "Lord of all," or "He isn't Lord at all."

He said he had strayed from the Catholic faith in the 1960s and 70s, and "did whatever I felt like doing."

His mother had given him a New Testament when he went away to college and after a month, he began to read it. As he was reading Luke, he came to a verse when Jesus said, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord and you don't do what I say?" Martin said he tried to imagine Jesus' facial expression as he was saying this.

"In my imagination, I heard him say, Curtis? Why do you call me Lord and you don't do what I say?"

"I felt punched in the gut!" he said. "Jesus has called me up through the

centuries.”

He prayed, “Oh God, I want your love. I want to follow you. I’m all yours. I’ll go anywhere, say anything, do anything, I want you to save me.”

His life began to “radically change,” and when he went back to the sacraments, “the sacraments worked the way they were supposed to.”

“That first confession! Whew!” he said. “The priest said, ‘That’s the confession I became a priest to hear.’”



**Sr. Ann Shields spoke on the importance of forgiveness at the New Evangelization Summit, noting unforgiveness is one of the biggest blocks to holiness.CCN Photo**

Sr. Ann Shields also stressed yielding to the Holy Spirit and a “willingness to give God everything.”

“It doesn’t mean God takes over, but he inspires and ignites,” she said. “What God wants to do is give us more and more. He knows the challenges we are facing and He wants to equip us.”

“Christ wants to make His home in us, by the power of the Holy Spirit,” she said. “The biggest obstacle to that love working through us is the inability in many of us to forgive.”

“If we’re going to be one through whom God can love others, the biggest obstacle is unforgiveness,” she said.

Some people are silent after someone hurts them, others become “vindictive” and speak about the injury to others and “communicate poison.”

Saint Pope John Paul II said: “‘Forgiveness is not the opposite of justice. Forgiveness is the opposite of resentment and revenge,’” Shields said.

Everyday Christians pray the Lord’s prayer which says, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” she said. “Do we live

it? Do we really mean that? Do we do that?"

"Every day, I say to the Lord, help me to forgive others as you've forgiven me," she said.

"The motivation of resentment and revenge will not lead to new life," she said.



**Michael Dopp of Mission of the Redeemer Ministries organized the New Evangelization Summit**CCN Photo

Michael Dopp, founder of Mission of the Redeemer Ministries, and organizer of the Summit, described how reading an account at Easter of how some of the first witnesses had come on the empty tomb closed with the words: "and then they remembered his words."

"How could they forget? They spent three years camping out with Jesus!" Dopp said. "We would never forget what the man said who raised the dead, healed the sick, who cast out demons."

But then he realized God was asking him, "What haven't I heard? What have I heard that I haven't really made part of my life?"

"We might say we're sons and daughters of the King, but do we live like that?" Dopp asked.

He spoke on the importance of dying to self.

"We think if we die we'll lose something of our personality, our passion, our dreams," he said. "If we give our lives to God, we lose nothing of what makes like good, beautiful or great."

"God doesn't want to kill our personality, our joys, our pleasures, He wants to kill our desires for sin, break through these worldly promises we've bought into," he said. God is saying, 'I have something better for you.'

Christy Dupuis, a former lay missionary with Catholic Christian Outreach, who now serves on her parish's Pastoral Team, urged those present to use their

personal testimonies in evangelizing others.

“People need to hear an authentic witness, an authentic telling of God’s presence in our life today, that He’s active, that He’s real, not some distant figure in the clouds, that He lives here and He brings joy beyond comparison,” she said.

She urged complete dependence on Christ, authentic love and one on one evangelization through relationships.

“The day that we forget our own need for Jesus is the day we lose the ability to share him with others,” she said.

Other speakers included Ottawa Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, who spoke on the fruit of the recent pilgrimage of a major relic of St. Francis Xavier and how revival of popular piety in pilgrimages, Marian consecration, Corpus Christi processions and getting to know our Canadian saints can be tools of evangelization.

George Weigel, author of a biography of Saint John Paul II, spoke on how the Catholic Church is in a period of transition from the Church of the Counter-Reformation to the Church of the New Evangelization, an exhilarating but sometimes disorienting time.