

**A Qualitative Study of Youth Evangelisation using the Internet**

*by*

Sony Sebastian B Ph , B Sc , B Th , M A

*Student No 54177227*

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

*Supervisors*

Dr Andrew G McGrady and Dr Kevin Williams

School of Education

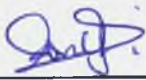
Mater Dei Institute of Education

Dublin City University

October 2011

## Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: 

Sony Sebastian

ID No.: 5417#227 Date: 2 DEC 2011

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Table of Contents	iv
Abstract	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
List of Abbreviations	xi
Chapter	
1 INTRODUCTION	
1 1 The Church, the Internet and Young People An Overview	1
1 2 A Net Driven Church?	3
1 3 Youth Excitement of Today and Promises of Tomorrow	4
1 4 The Internet Powered by Youth	5
1 5 Primary Objective of the Study	6
1 6 Structure of the Thesis	6
<b>PART I – THEORETICAL CONCERNS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2 EVANGELISATION IN A GLOBAL WORLD	
2 1 Context and Main Topics	9
2 2 Evangelisation The Universal Mission of the Church	11
2 3 Pioneers of Modern Evangelisation	
Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II	26
2 4 Summary and Conclusions	47
3 THE CHARACTERISTICS AND POTENTIAL OF THE INTERNET AS A MEANS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION	
3 1 Communication	51
3 2 Unweaving the Web	58
3 3 Sacred Space and Cyberspace	72
3 4 Conclusion	94

Chapter	Page
<b>4 EMPOWERING YOUTH IN CYBERSPACE</b>	
4 1 The Concept of Youth	96
4 2 Characteristics of Cyber-age Youth	104
4 3 Natives of the Post-modern Era	106
4 4 Cyber Relationships Locale of Youth Ministry	115
4 5 From Hyper text to Hyper being a Proposal	122
4 6 Conclusion	137
<b>PART II – FIELDWORK .....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>5 THE CYBERSOULS PROJECT DESIGN, PILOTING AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
5 1 Design of the <i>Cybersouls</i> Project	140
5 2 Piloting of the Project	150
5 3 Research Ethics	155
5 4 Implementation of the Project	155
5 5 Data Collection and Case Study Selection	160
5 6 Conclusion	175
<b>6 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS AND CASE STUDY DESCRIPTIONS</b>	
6 1 Findings Online Questionnaire	176
6 2 Review of Research Questions	188
6 3 Case Studies using NVivo	191
6 4 Case Descriptions	194
6 5 Consolidation of Case Studies	207
6 6 Conclusion	209

Chapter	Page
<b>7 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CASES</b>	
7 1 Methods of Analysis	210
7 2 Dynamics of Online Interaction	214
7 3 Characteristics of Virtual Communication	219
7 4 Evangelisation in Cyberspace	239
7 5 Conclusion	252
<b>8 SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS</b>	
8 1 Overview of the Study	253
8 2 Research Findings	254
8 3 Suggestions for Expanding the Project	266
8 4 Possible Areas of Future Research	267
8 5 Final Reflections	269
Appendices	271
Bibliography	296

## ABSTRACT

### A Qualitative Study of Youth Evangelisation using the Internet

Sony Sebastian

This research examines the effectiveness of the Internet as a means of youth evangelisation. The project is divided into two main parts: (i) The establishment of a theoretical base relating to the concept of evangelisation, the Internet as a means of social communication and youth culture; (ii) The design, implementation and analysis of a cohort of case studies to test a research question based on the theoretical perspectives.

Following a general introduction (Ch 1), the chapter on evangelisation (Ch 2) defines the concept and examines its development. The Internet as a means of social communication is considered in chapter 3, preceded by an overview of broader models of communication of relevance to web 2.0. In chapter 4 various aspects of contemporary global youth culture are considered in the context of web 2.0. The second part of the study – the fieldwork, covered in Chapters 5-7, is based on the design and activation of an online portal (*Cybersouls*). The main research question was to test the efficacy of the online mentoring of young people by Faith Friends (FFs) intended to deepen their understanding, appreciation and appropriation of their faith tradition. This was facilitated through mutual online interaction in the context of religious education material presented in digital *Scrolls*.

Mixed methods were adopted in the analytical process. In-depth qualitative analysis of data (using NVivo) was undertaken relating to a sample of cases selected by survey sampling and usage sampling techniques.

The key research findings are: (i) Effective mentoring by a Faithfriend enhances the potential of the web 2.0 environment for youth evangelisation. Such effective mentoring depends on careful selection and training of Faithfriends, particularly their proficiency in ICT skills, youth culture and knowledge of the faith tradition; (ii) A collaborative and constructivist model of using the Internet underpins an effective approach to evangelisation with young people; (iii) Making use of the full potential of web 2.0, the proficiency of multimedia and social networking enhances the effectiveness of evangelisation; (iv) The efficacy of an online environment of evangelisation is dependent on the calibre of the offline resources and organisational capacities that are utilised.

## Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude to everybody who offered me assistance in various ways in the course of my research

First of all, I wish to thank my supervisor, Dr Andrew G McGrady, who trusted, challenged and inspired me on my research journey. Also, I acknowledge the support and encouragement given by Dr Kevin Williams, as a co-supervisor. Dr Paddy Devit and Dr Gabriel Flynn were most helpful during various stages of the project.

I am indebted to the staff in the registry and the library and the IT department of Mater Dei Institute of Education for their assistance during my time on the campus.

Special thanks are due to John Chacko for his input in the design and development of the website.

To those members of Jesus Youth who shared the task of authenticating Faithfriends, together with members of other youth movements, I offer my sincere appreciation. The Faithfriends themselves and all Cybersouls who acted as the 'salt of the earth' merit special mention as, without them, this research could not have been undertaken.

I gratefully remember the congregation of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) to which I belong, for their continued trust in me over these years.

Finally, my warmest thanks are due to my beloved parents and all my friends in Ireland and India for their ongoing support throughout the project.

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Tables</b>	<b>Page</b>
5 1 Initial Case Processing Summary with 8 Variables	170
5 2 First Result of Reliability Test	171
5 3 Inter-item Correlation Matrix in Survey	171
5 4 Item-Total Statistics	172
5 5 Reliability Statistics with 7 Variables	172
5 6 Selected Participants for Qualitative Analysis	174
6 1 Pseudonyms Given to Selected CSs and FFs	194
7 1 Summary of Tools Used in <i>Scrolls</i>	214
7 2 Completion Rate of <i>Scrolls</i> within 13 Cases	238
8 1 Online Activities of FFs and CSs	260
9 1 List of <i>Scrolls</i>	276
9 2 Dynamic Tools Used for Interactivity and Conversation in <i>Scrolls</i>	280



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1 1 The Rise in Internet Use by Age	3
2 1 The Three Spheres of the Study	10
2 2 Various Currents Involved in the Onward Journey of the Church	49
3 1 Simple Form of Communication	52
3 2 Shannon & Weaver Model of Communication	55
3 3 Three Categories of Internet Users	89
5 1 A Jesus Youth member Chooses to be an Online Faithfriend	145
5 2 Cybersouls Begin the Registration Process	146
5 3 <i>Scrolls</i> (Lessons for Online Catechesis)	148
5 4 Interaction between a Cybersoul and Faith Friend	149
5 5 Online Activities Involved in the Project	153
5 6 Overall View of the Roles of Participants in the <i>Cybersouls</i> Project	159
5 7 A Drama Frame of Communication in <i>Cybersouls</i>	164
5 8 Usage of <i>Scrolls</i> by Cybersouls	168
6 1 The <i>Scrolls</i> /themes in this website helped me to reflect seriously about my faith	177
6 2 I like interacting via social networking sites such as Facebook, Bebo, Orkut, Myspace etc	178
6 3 I feel part of the online <i>Cybersouls</i> community	179
6 4 I am closer to my parish/community because of the <i>Cybersouls</i> website	180
6 5 I understand my Catholic faith better now	182
6 6 I would recommend the <i>Cybersouls</i> website to a friend in order to deepen his/her faith	183
6 7 My Faithfriend in the <i>Cybersouls</i> website has helped me to deepen my faith	183
6 8 Taking part in the <i>Cybersouls</i> project has enlivened my faith	184
6 9 Additional Comments	185
6 10 Linear Merge of the Three Spheres	189
6 11 Dynamic Merge of Three Spheres	190
6 12 Elements in a Case	193
7 1 Research Model Adopted in this Study	212
7 2 Dimensions of Interactivity between Cybersouls and Faithfriends	230
7 3 Interactive Landscape in <i>Cybersouls</i> Portal	232
7 4 Average rate of Completion of Conversations between Cases	244
8 1 Important Factors in the Research	263
8 2 Convergence of the Three Spheres Forming the Space of Evangelisation	264

## ABBREVIATIONS

ARPANET	Advanced Research Projects Agency Network
BEC	Basic Ecclesial Community
CA	Conversation Analysis
CAQDAS	Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis System
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCUN	Church Computer User Network
CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
CMS	Content Management System
CS	Cybersoul
DA	Discourse Analysis
EN	<i>Evangelu Nuntiandi</i>
FF	Faithfriend
FNC	Federal Networking Council
FTP	File Transfer Protocol
GDC	General Directory for Catechesis
GNU	GNU's Not Unix
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IRC	Internet Relay Chat
IWG	Interagency Working Groups
JY	Jesus Youth
KWIC	Key Word in Context
LSN	Large Scale Networking
MUD	Multi User Dungeons
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
TCP/IP	Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol
WAN	Wide Area Network
WCD	World Communications Day
WYD	World Youth Day
YCW	Young Christian Workers

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The research presented in this dissertation is centered on an exploratory study which investigates how the Internet could be used by the Catholic Church as a means of progressing the evangelisation of young people

The aim of this opening chapter is to introduce the project and present an overview of the complete study. It commences by providing a brief backdrop in sequence to the Church, the Internet and young people in the context of evangelisation. Next, the primary objective of the study is set out. Finally, the structure of the entire thesis is delineated.

### **1.1 The Church, the Internet and Young People: An Overview**

The accumulated wisdom of the Catholic Church has evolved over a period of 2000 years. During this time, its continuity has depended on the handing down of faith from one generation to the next. Therefore, the faith development of young people has always been a priority in the mission of the Church as they constitute the link to the following generation. The message of Jesus Christ is at its core. His experience, emanating from His life on the Earth, His death on the cross followed by His resurrection, underpins the messages to be conveyed. The Church's ideas and doctrines grew and expanded as it encountered numerous cultures which enriched its teachings and existence over the years.

Taking into account the constantly changing environment in which it exists, the Church has to renew its own ministries. Regarding evangelisation, which is a core mission of the Church,

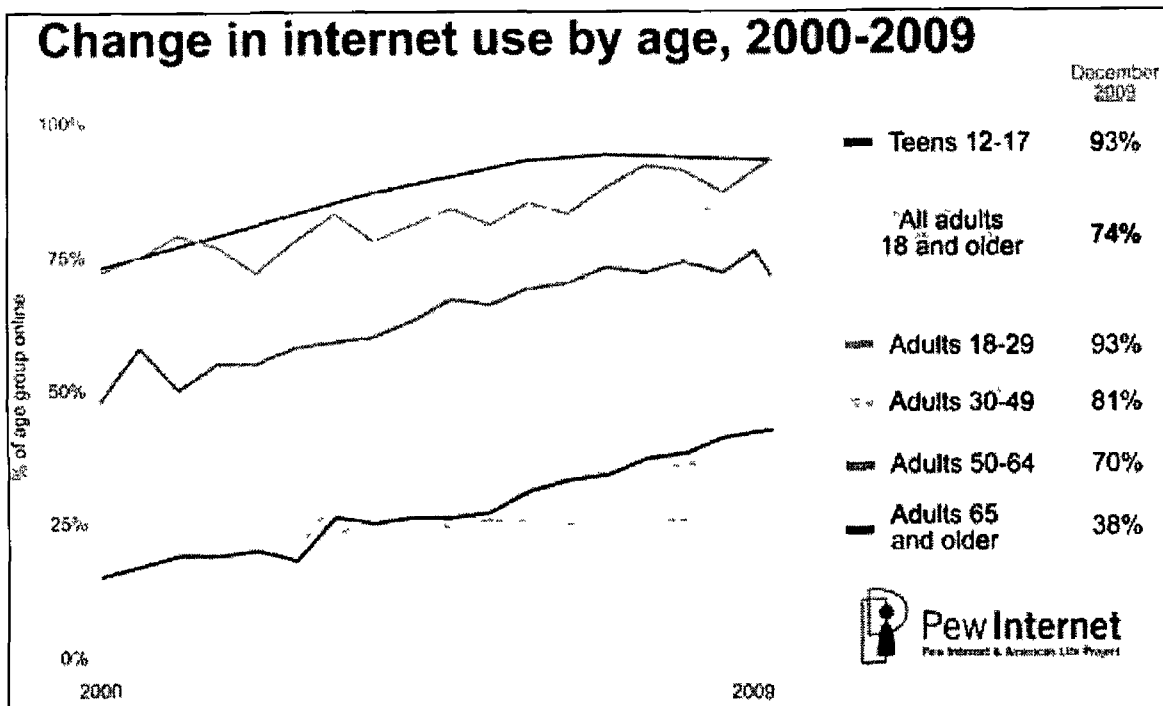
it has to read the signs of the time, as Vatican II (1965) invited it to do. In the current climate, part of the Church's response involves taking an active and positive interest in Information Technology which has such a dominant role in the contemporary world.

The introduction of the Internet has transformed society faster than any other modern invention and this revolution is sweeping across the globe at a tremendous pace. Primarily, the Internet and its surrounding communication technology appear to have accelerated the speed of the distribution of knowledge and revolutionised methods of learning worldwide. Young people adapt to this mode of learning with such a natural ease that they often leave older generations in awe. The acquisition and formatting of ideas that took perhaps generations to put in place now seems instantly accessible to them, being available at the tips of their fingers.

As Sherry Turkle (1996) explains, for young people, this form of learning is not new because they are surrounded by technology from their birth. For their parents, the change is so rapid that they find it difficult to catch up. In contrast, young people are born into a fast pace of life and therefore it becomes the norm for them. While older people may find some of the material on the Internet disturbing, young people perceive it as being attractive and exciting. This electronic wave has had a significant impact in society over the last three decades, inducing swift changes in many spheres of human existence. These changes have spawned a raft of new technology. 'E-mail' was one of the initial terms the Internet introduced into the technological lexicon. This was followed by e-learning, e-business, e-books, e-cash, e-commerce, e-journal, e-ticket, emoticons, e-dating etc. Facilities such as Facebook, Bebo, YouTube, and Twitter are now common currency. The rise in Internet use by age (Lenhart et al., 2010) is captured in Fig 1.1 below. It shows that usage is highest in the 12-29 year age

group, reaching 93% in the US by 2009. This endorses the popularity of the medium for the young generation in the US.

**Fig 1.1 The Rise in Internet Use by Age**



Source: Lenhart et al (2010)

Elliot (2010) reports that the users of Facebook, a favourite of the younger generation, grew from 1 million in 2004 to 500 million by 2010. This phenomenal growth is just one endorsement of the popularity of the Internet among young people.

### 1.2 Net Driven Church?

Regarding the impact of the Internet on the spiritual realm, a general observation suggests that the Catholic Church considers the paradigm as an innovative prospect. It is appropriate therefore that the Church should consider the possibility of the Internet in the spiritual sphere (Foley, 2002a). However, it does not seem to have emulated the pace of the 'dotcom' companies in adapting to this new medium. The Church does not appear to have taken

advantage of the openings which other institutions and individuals have grasped and used to great affect. It seems unable to identify the opportunities which other institutions and individuals have recognised in this technology. This suggests that the Church may be somewhat removed from this technologically dominated world and hesitant to interact with it.

Although Jesus ordered the disciples to take nothing except a staff for their journey, when He sent out the twelve in pairs 2000 years ago (Mk 6 7-9), it is now considered necessary to equip ministers with the appropriate modern tools in their core mission of evangelisation (Foley, 2002a). It is argued that the Internet is a powerful medium which can be utilised effectively by the Catholic Church, especially for the faith development of young people. The following sections support the rationale of this stance.

### **1.3 Youth: Excitement of Today and Promise of Tomorrow**

Taking a long-term view, it is evident that the destiny of mankind lies in its young people. Therefore if the Church does not seek them out, it is putting its own future at risk. While many traditional forms of worship do not seem to be attractive to young people today, they still yearn for a spiritual fulfilment, having an inner yearning for God. Beaudoin (1998) argues that signs of their unfulfilled spiritual hunger can always be identified in their behaviour. According to Careaga (2001), from an early age they have an innate curiosity which compels them to pick and choose and be in control, rather than being told what to do. As the Internet, with its vast and varied forms of information, caters well for this curiosity in young people, it is widely used by them on a regular basis. It is considered that the Church, by providing its presence effectively on the Internet, can respond to the yearning of young people for God.

#### **1.4 The Internet: Powered by Youth**

The Internet, with its global reach, is the medium of the future. It receives life from the human presence at each node, *vice versa*, going online gives life to the head, heart and hands. In particular, it is consonant with the thinking of young minds. The philosophy of the medium, its values, culture, etiquette, language (smilies, avatars, lingo etc.) etc are easily absorbed by young minds. Thus the Internet seems to be close to their cognitive patterns. Therefore it is submitted that an in-depth understanding of the organisation and *modus operandi* of the Internet can provide the Church with promising opportunities for evangelisation.

This involves the Church taking a retrospective look at its own ministries. Evangelisation being the term encompassing the ministries of the Church, a question arises, regarding which form of evangelisation is to be initiated by the Church online? Any apprehension to enter into this medium, if it exists, needs to be set aside. It is submitted that reading the signs of the time, as Vatican II invited the Church to do, involves taking an active and positive interest in Information and Communication Technology.

In conclusion it can be said that adapting to the modalities of the Internet calls for considerable research and reflection. Creative and imaginative design will be required from the Church leadership in order to implement new ways of being the Church. This study provides hands-on experience in relation to the use of the Internet by the Church to further youth evangelisation. It is hoped that the insights gleaned from it will make a modest contribution to the development of the Church's youth ministries in the technological era of the 21st century and beyond.

## **1.5 Primary Objective of the Study**

The primary objective of the research is to establish the potential role of the Internet as an instrument in the evangelisation of young people. More specific objectives are given in chapter 5.

## **1.6 Structure of the Thesis**

This opening chapter provides an introduction to the research. Then the thesis is divided into two main parts: Part I - Theoretical Concerns and Part II - the fieldwork. A review of the relevant literature is presented in Part I (chapters 2, 3 and 4). Chapter 2 explores evangelisation, clarifying various aspects of the concept and identifying its relevance in the contemporary world. In addition, the contributions of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II to the process of evangelisation, particularly in relation to young people, are described. Communication is considered in chapter 3 which also includes a review of the Internet. Having identified web 2.0 as a space with potential for the evangelisation of young people, the discussion in chapter 4 provides an in-depth review of youth.

Part II deals with the fieldwork in the following three chapters (5, 6 and 7), which was centred on designing and activating an online site – *www.cybersouls.ie* – for the faith development of young people. In chapter 5 the research questions are reviewed and objectives are clarified. Also, the piloting and implementation of this project are described. The opinion of the participants regarding this online initiative are presented in the questionnaire findings in chapter 6 together with details of the selection of 13 cases for more in-depth analysis. Then the qualitative analysis of the interactions of these selected cases, using NVivo, follows in chapter 7.



The concluding chapter (chapter 8) draws together the main strands of the study. A brief review of the project is provided, followed by a synthesis of the main findings addressing the research questions in relation to the three main areas of the research. In addition, suggestions for expanding this exploratory study are identified together with areas for future research.

“The Church is born of the evangelising activity of Jesus and the Twelve. She is the normal, desired, most immediate and most visible fruit of this activity. “Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations” (Mt 28:19)” (Paul VI, 1975b, para. 15). As evangelisation is at the core of this study, it is analysed in detail in the next chapter.

**PART - I**  
**THEORETICAL CONCERNS**

## CHAPTER 2

### EVANGELISATION:

#### A FUNDAMENTAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH TODAY

This chapter explores various aspects of the theme of evangelisation. The opening section presents the background and context of the study. This is followed by an account of various aspects of evangelisation. Finally, the contributions of Paul VI and John Paul II, both pioneers of modern evangelisation, are considered.

#### 2.1 Context and Main Topics

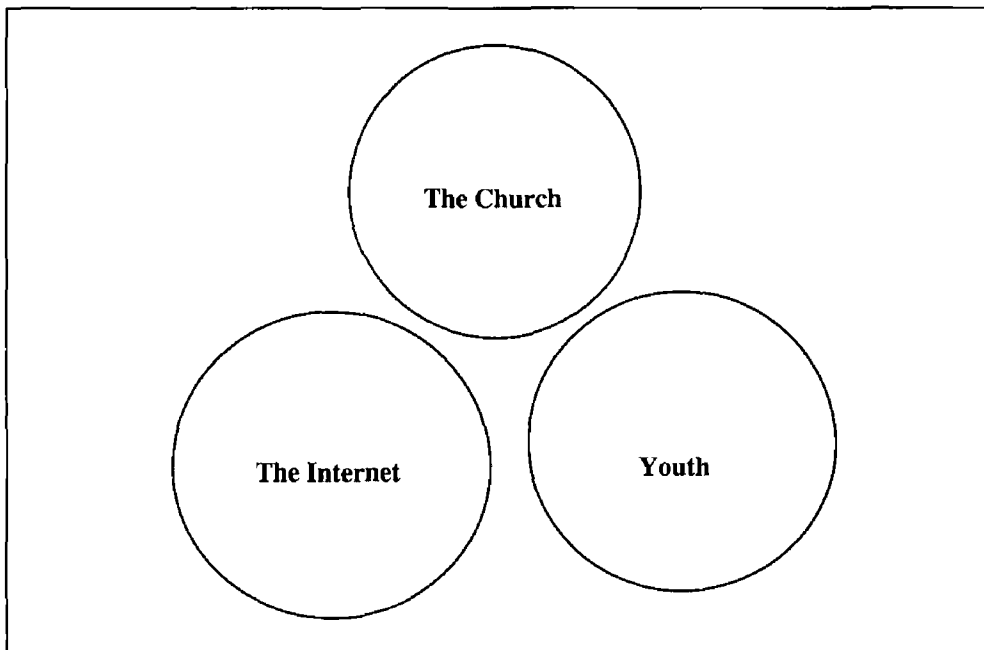
*Context:* And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new' (Rev 21:5). The Greek philosopher Heraclitus observed that "no man ever steps in the same river twice, for it is not the same river and he is not the same man" (cited in Graham, 2002, Section 3). He held that an explanation of change was fundamental to any theory of nature. More recently, Vatican II testified that "Today, the human race is involved in a new stage of history. Profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the whole world which has repercussions on man's religious life as well" (Vatican II, (1965f, para. 4). In the contemporary world, the fast pace of change is affecting both the Church, as well as the wider world. Pope Paul VI (1964) captured this reality in the document *Ecclesiam Suam* observing that this all pervading change also impacts on the Church.

Not so long ago, churches used to be packed with worshippers. All the different age cohorts in the human spectrum thronged into the temples of eternal wisdom. This was true in the case

of the Catholic Church as well. However, things have changed considerably in recent years. Regarding the different age groups, there seems to be a black hole in the Church through which young people disappear, particularly those between the ages of 15-35 (Briggs, 2008). This study sets out to address this challenge by exploring the opportunities afforded particularly by the Internet for the development of youth evangelisation.

Three spheres are involved in this study: the sphere of the Church, youth culture and the space of the Internet. This is depicted graphically in Fig 2.1 below. The possibility of the convergence of these three spheres is a fundamental issue in this thesis. In this chapter, they are looked at from the point of view of the Church.

**Fig 2.1 The Three Spheres of the Study**



Referring to the Internet, Gibson (1984) observes

Cyberspace, A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts. A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every

computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. (p. 104)

The spreading of the word of God reached new dimensions in the last four decades due to the fast growth of media technology, whereas evangelisation achieved a new spirit, with unprecedented youth participation. A detailed study of evangelisation, which is a fundamental activity of the Church, is provided in the literature review below. The Church's stance regarding the internet and young people are explored later in the chapter imbibing from the life and teachings of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II.

## **2.2 Evangelisation: The Universal Mission of the Church**

Evangelisation is the fundamental driving force in this research. At this theory development stage of the study, the essence of evangelisation is explored first of all, considering its ontological aspects.

### ***Evangelisation: Ontological Aspects***

The etymology, definition and other related concepts regarding evangelisation are discussed below.

#### ***Evangelisation***

Literally the word 'evangelisation' means 'bringing good news' (Dorr, 2000, p. 76). Bosch (1991) analyses the Greek words '*evangelion* (gospel), *evangelizesthai/ evangelizein* (preach the gospel) which contributed two words to the English language with similar meanings - 'evangelism' and 'evangelisation'. Dorr (2000) says that, of the two words, 'evangelism' has a much longer history in English. It is favoured by the evangelical wing of Protestantism,

putting a great deal of emphasis on getting people to listen to and read the Bible. Thus 'evangelism' was more associated with the great preaching crusades of evangelists such as Billy Graham.

Bosch (1991) states that 'evangelisation' came to be widely used by 1975 in the Catholic Church, with the publication of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN), when it supplanted the word 'mission'. He says that this document shuns the word 'mission' and uses 'evangelisation' and its cognates more than 214 times. "Evangelisation is understood here as an umbrella concept embracing the whole activity of the Church sent into the world. "One single term - evangelisation - defines Christ's office and mandate" (Bosch, 1991, p. 411). He continues by saying that the activities of the Church such as proclamation, translation, dialogue, service and presence and goals such as human development, liberation, justice and peace are integral parts of the ministry of evangelisation. In his apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, John Paul II (1988) stated that "The entire mission of the Church, then, is concentrated and manifested in evangelisation" (para. 33). His predecessor, Pope Paul VI, in EN, observed that "Evangelising is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity" (Paul VI, 1975b, para. 14). He defined the mission and identity of the Church more comprehensively and methodically than in the past. "She exists in order to evangelise, that is to say in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace" (para. 14). Next the term 'mission', which was used instead of 'evangelisation' until almost thirty years ago (Dorr, 2000), is analysed.

### *Mission*

'Mission' is derived from the Latin word *missio* as an expression employed in the doctrine of the Trinity to denote the sending of the Son by the Father (Vatican II, 1964a) and of the Holy

Spirit by the Father and the Son (Bosch, 1991) (The theological discourse of the east and west regarding the *filioque* is not discussed here as it is not considered appropriate ) The term 'mission' was first used by Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) (*365 Saints*, 1995), the founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in the sense of 'sending' ecclesiastical agents to distant colonies (Bosch, 1991) Thus the word 'mission' is also historically linked with the colonial era and with the idea of magisterial commissioning The term presupposed an established church in Europe which dispatched delegates to convert overseas peoples and was, as such, an attendant phenomenon of European expansion Mission encompassed activities by which the Western ecclesiastical system was extended to the rest of the world (Bosch, 1991)

This initial meaning of 'mission' as working in foreign non-Christian areas and its association with colonialism were considered by theologians and consequently Vatican II broadened the meaning of 'mission' to cover the whole work of the Church (Dorr, 2000) It is similar to the term 'evangelisation' As Bosch (1991) explains it

By the sixth decade of this century, however, it was generally accepted in all confessional families that mission belongs to the essence of the church Mission was no longer merely an activity of the Church, but an expression of the very being of the church (p 493)

Soon the scriptural word 'evangelisation', which was more fresh without any associated image of working in foreign non-Christian areas, began to be used to describe the fundamental work of the Church in any situation Furthermore, in the words of Dorr (2000), the text from Luke's Gospel 4:18-21, which links the 'good news' with the liberation of captives, meant that the word 'evangelisation' could be used to convey a sense of the comprehensiveness and integral quality of Christianity, i.e., it is not just a message about

'spiritual' affairs or about the next life, but also involves a commitment to transform this present world (Dorr, 2000)

The origin and purpose of mission are clearly expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC, 1994)

The Lord's missionary mandate is ultimately grounded in the eternal love of the Most Holy Trinity 'The Church on Earth is by her nature missionary, since according to the plan of the Father, she has as her origin the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit ' The ultimate purpose of mission is none other than to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in the Spirit of love

(para 850)

The discussion of the terms 'evangelisation' and 'mission' endorses Bosch's (1991) observation that "Mission, evangelisation and witness are nowadays often used by Catholics as synonymous" (p 411) The same writer notes that, for the previous fifteen centuries of the missionary history of the Church, other terms were used in place of mission such as propagation of the faith, preaching of the gospel, apostolic proclamation, promulgation of the gospel, augmenting the faith, expanding the Church, planting the church, illuminating the nations etc (Bosch, 1991)

Evangelisation is the fundamental duty of the Church Inherited from Jesus Christ, the first evangeliser, it stands as its primary aim Here the evolution of the term *evangelisation* and similar terms were analysed, capturing a historical perspective on evangelisation Some important aspects of evangelisation are next for discussion



### *Evangelisation as fundamental mission of the Church*

“I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God , for I was sent for this purpose ”

(Lk 4 43) A mission is a duty entrusted to a person to achieve a particular task According to Dorr (2000), the mission of the Catholic Church is evangelisation itself He says that ‘bringing good news’ is the meaning of evangelisation, which is repeated 24 times in the synoptic gospels (Dorr, 2000, p 76) This expression of ‘good news’ is summed up in the classical text from Luke’s Gospel

The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring the good news to the poor He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed to go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour ’ Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing’ (Lk 4 18-21)

Dorr (2000) highlights three aspects of this text First there is the ‘Good News’ of liberation for people who are poor, oppressed or disadvantaged Jesus began his mission preaching liberation for *people* Therefore his mission was anthropological Secondly, this liberation being brought by Jesus is something new It is Christo-centric Thirdly, it takes place through the power of the Holy Spirit, i e , it is pneumatic - spirit centred All these aspects reflect the personal love of God for his people, through the person of Jesus Christ It continues through the Holy Spirit, even after the death and resurrection of Jesus It is understood that evangelisation, or ‘bringing of good news’, is achieved through the friendship of God for human beings by the incarnation of Jesus Christ Therefore, evangelisation, as lived by Jesus Christ, is anthropological, Christo-centric and pneumatic

### *Jesus the First Evangeliser*

The apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) (Paul VI, 1975b) on Evangelisation in the Modern World is considered to be the 'Roman Catholic Magna Carta of the mission of the Church' (Luzbetak, 1988, p.111). It says that "Jesus himself, the Good News of God, was the very first and great evangeliser; he was so through and through: to perfection and to the point of sacrifice of his earthly life" (Paul VI, 1975b, para. 7). *Evangelii Nuntiandi* comprehends the meaning, the content and the modes of evangelisation conceived and put into practice by Jesus in the following themes: Proclamation of the Kingdom of God; Proclamation of liberating salvation; Total interior conversion which the Gospel calls *metanoia*; Tireless preaching of the Word of God with authority; Proclamation through evangelical signs and Proclamation for an evangelised and evangelising community (para. 7-13). In order to continue his ministry of Proclamation of the Kingdom of God, liberating salvation and *metanoia*, in the Acts of the Apostles we see Jesus commissioning his disciples: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit will come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). In Acts 2 we read about the preaching of the Apostles with evangelical signs.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ and his preaching of liberation to the people provided the initial foundation for evangelisation in this world. This human centred mission of God was fulfilled in Christ and it became spirit centred or pneumatic in the first Christian communities.

In the debate which follows about evangelisation in the Catholic Church, teachings and traditions about 'mission' and other terms used previously with a similar meaning to

'evangelisation', are used as appropriate. A coherent concept of 'evangelisation', as understood by the Catholic Church, now follows.

*Evangelisation has a Trinitarian origin*

The constitution *Dei Verbum* of the Vatican II (1965d) describes Revelation as that act by which God manifests himself personally to man (para 3). This personal love and the resulting communication of God with humanity are beautifully presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC, 1994).

God who 'dwells in unapproachable light' wants to communicate his own divine life to the men he freely created, in order to adopt them as his sons in his only begotten Son. By revealing himself God wishes to make them capable of responding to him and of knowing him and of loving him far beyond their own natural capacity (para 52).

This intimate communication between God and human beings, culminating in the person of Jesus Christ, is reiterated in the CCC by quoting St. Irenaeus of Lyons, "The Word of God dwelt in man and became the Son of man in order to accustom man to perceive God and to accustom God to dwell in man, according to the Father's pleasure" (CCC, para 53). Thus by divine ordination this communication is intended to be mutual and interactive because it is a process of God and man becoming accustomed to one another. *The General Directory for Catechesis*, (GDC, 1998) says that 'God, in his greatness, uses a pedagogy to reveal himself to the human person, he uses human events and words to communicate his plan' (para 38). This approach to communicate God's Good News is the pedagogy which God employed to communicate with humans.

Evangelisation is the process of transmitting Revelation to the world. It is accomplished through words and deeds. The GDC (1998) says that it is at once both testimony and proclamation, word and sacrament, teaching and task. Evangelisation transmits the words and deeds of Revelation, it is obliged to proclaim and narrate them and at the same time to make clear the profound mysteries they contain (para 39) “The Church, the universal sacrament of salvation” (Vatican II, 1964a, para 48, Vatican II, 1965a, para 1), born of the Holy Spirit, transmits Revelation through evangelisation, she announces the Good News of the salvific plan of the father and, in the sacraments, communicates his Divine Gifts (GDC, 1998, para 45). According to *Gaudium et Spes* (Vatican II, 1965f), this is achieved by the witnessing of the Church serving as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society as it is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God’s family (para 40). As stated in *Lumen Gentium* (Vatican II, 1964a) “By an utterly free and mysterious decree of His own wisdom and goodness, the eternal Father created the whole world. His plan was to dignify persons with a participation in His own divine life” (para 2). By participating in the communication of the Internet, the Church also has to act as a leaven, transforming cultures and, consequently, people belonging to these cultures, as children of God. The pedagogy that the Church adopts in this participation has to make use of the language of the cultures it encounters. These include the culture of youth and the seemingly ephemeral but boundless culture of the Internet.

### *Purpose of Evangelisation*

*Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN, Paul VI, 1975b) says that evangelisation is bringing the Good News to all strata of humanity and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new, according to the promise of the Father in the Revelations “Now I am making the whole of creation new” (Rev 21 5). Evangelising the cyberspace, which is a new stratum of human existence, is considered here. The Church makes use of the Internet in

various ways. However, the Internet seems to be a new stratum of human existence where the Good News has not yet been incarnated in a profound way. “The purpose of evangelisation is the interior conversion of the personal and collective conscience of people, the activities in which they engage and the lives and *milieux* which are theirs” (Paul VI, 1975b, para 18). It is a vital and in-depth transformation, reaching to the very roots of culture, taking the person as the starting point and coming back to the relationships of people among themselves and with God (para 20). This requires knowing the particular culture which is being evangelised. Evangelisation, by its divine origin as well as its divine purpose, is closely related to culture.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, it is the task of the entire People of God to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age, and to judge them in the light of the divine word (Vatican II, 1965f, para 44).

Therefore it is vital for the Church to understand the Internet and the culture of youth which are explored in Chapters 3 and 4. Various elements of the process of evangelisation are next for consideration.

### *Essential Elements of Evangelisation*

In his apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, Pope John Paul II (1979) explained that evangelisation is a rich, complex and dynamic process, made up of elements or moments that are essential and different from each other. This reiterates what Pope Paul VI (1975b) wrote in EN, following Vatican II. The corresponding evangelical foundations of these aspects are listed in the General Catechetical Directory (GDC, 1998): “proclaim” (Mk 16:15), “make disciples and teach” (Mt 28:19-20), “be my witness” (Acts 1:8), “baptize” (Mt 28:19), “Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19), “love one another” (Jn 15:12).

More concretely, Initial Proclamation, Christian Initiation, Catechesis, Religious Education, New Evangelisation and Theological Reflection are identified as the essential moments of evangelisation in the of the National Directory for Catechesis of Ireland (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010, p 51-62) All of these elements can be categorised in two modes (a) sacramental (b) non-sacramental For example, initial proclamation can happen anywhere during a Church homily to a congregation or in a one-to-one conversation Reading the Holy Bible and any written article can also provide moments of initial proclamation Even if Christian initiation into the Church community is accomplished through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist, this process is not completely sacramental in the case of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) The preparation for the sacraments need not necessarily be in a community Thus some dimensions of the moments of evangelisation can be performed in spaces other than actual corporeal human communities In other words, the word of God can be encountered by the human soul in circumstances other than sacramental presence Weigel (2005) cites an instance from the life of John Paul II who testified that “the overcrowded Paris Metro was a “superb” place for contemplation” (p 83) Therefore, cyberspace, where people congregate electronically, may be a place of encounter of the Word of God Consequently, it can create a new space of actualising these moments of evangelisation (The characteristics of cyberspace which can substantially help the evangelisation of young people are discussed later in chapter 3 on Internet Communication )

These elements of evangelisation are intended for those who choose the Gospel for the first time and those who need to complete or modify their initiation The Christian faithful of mature faith in the bosom of the Christian community are also the beneficiaries of this process (Paul VI, 1975b, para 49-57) The GDC stresses the importance of repeating these moments, if necessary, as they give evangelical nourishment in proportion to the spiritual

growth of each person or of the entire community (GDC, 1998, para 49) These moments are complementary and mutually enriching, according to EN (Paul VI, 1975b, para 24) If the Church is targeting young people on the Internet, the ways of initiating dialogue with those young people to deepen their journey of faith need to be identified This shows that there are sub-categories within the broad umbrella of young people which need to be identified and dealt with according to their religiosity and religious adherence These sub-categories are examined in the next section

### *Evangelisation in the Church*

This section explores aspects of evangelisation in the Church community Then existing modes of evangelisation are considered Proclamation of the Gospel always begins with the Christian community and invites the people to conversion and the following of Christ This community welcomes those who wish to know the Lord better and permeate themselves with a new life Those who are initiated into faith and those deepening their faith are accompanied by the community with maternal solicitude, helping them participate in her own experience of faith and the Church incorporates them to herself (GDC, 1998, para 254)

The communion and communities within family, the baptismal catechumenate of adults, the parish, Catholic schools, associations, movements and groups of faithful and basic ecclesial communities are some of the fundamental loci of evangelisation which the GDC (1998) addresses directly (Renewing the Vision, 1997) Investigating whether there can be an online counterpart of these real life communities is a major research question

Also, traditionally, communities were the loci of evangelisation of young people The GDC (1998) recognises the family as such a community and as the primary locus of evangelisation

of its young members, and parents as the primary educators. The family is defined as a domestic Church where various aspects of evangelisation or functions of the life of the Church may be reflected. Christian education takes place here more by witnessing than teaching. It is more ongoing and daily, than structured formally. The question arises, can the faith formation of young people be initiated and enhanced within online communities? Of the communities listed earlier, attention is given here to evangelisation in the last two, i.e., associations, movements and groups of the faithful, as well as basic ecclesial communities. Finally, new movements in the Church which act as agents of evangelisation today are discussed briefly. The essential elements of evangelisation in these non-traditional communities are reviewed below.

### *Basic Ecclesial Communities*

It would be beneficial for the Church to consider new movements such as basic ecclesial communities which are included as part of its network for evangelisation. Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) are small groups of Catholics who meet regularly for services of prayer, worship and communal reflection on both their religious and secular lives (Sweetland, 2004, p. 68). They spring from the need to live the Church's life more intensely. EN states that the big cities lend themselves to life in the mass and to anonymity, consequently making people unable to fulfil the desire and quest for a more human dimension (Paul VI, 1975b, para. 58). New movements and basic ecclesial communities are a response to this feeling of alienation. These are the new forms of being the Church. According to the General Directory for Catechesis (1998), BECs are a sign of the Church's vitality. The GDC explains that "the disciples of Christ gather together in them so as to hear the word of God, to develop fraternal bonds, to celebrate the Christian mysteries in their lives and to assume responsibility for transforming society" (GDC, 1998, para. 263). In this way BECs are new attempts at



evangelisation 'under the movement of the Holy Spirit' within the communion of the Church (John Paul II, 1988, para 31)

The human values which emerge in the BECs are friendship, personal recognition, a spirit of co-responsibility, creativity, vocational response together with concern for the problems of the world and the Church. The GDC asserts that an enriched community experience can result from BECs which are true expressions of communion and a means of forming a more profound communion. It is considered that the characteristics of these communities may be adapted to the online communities proposed in this research. The following characteristics of BECs are identified in the GDC as being conducive to the process of evangelisation:

- the fraternal climate, in which it lives, is an environment suitable for integral catechetical activity, providing that the proper nature and character of catechesis is respected,
- catechesis must strive to deepen community life so as to ensure a basis for the Christian life of the faithful, without which basic Christian communities lack stability,
- the small community is always a suitable place to receive those who have concluded a catechetical journey (GDC, 1998, para 264)

*Catechesi Tradendae* considered the content of catechesis to be the same as the content of evangelisation (John Paul II, 1979, para 26). Fuellenbach (2002) argues that BECs address two needs of the Church in the context of the globalisation process. These are the need for inculturation of faith and the need to create a community in which justice and compassion are the basic principles of action. In this new ecclesial climate of BECs, he argues that there are two ecclesiologies or images of the Church involved. One is the hierarchical model and the other is the communion model. The hierarchical model promises continuity while the

communion model, with the origin of BECs, appeals particularly to new experiences. The old model is viewed by Fuellenbach as being organised around the axis of clergy-sacraments with the new model being organised around the axis of gospel-laity. With a blend of these two models, the participative hierarchical organisation of the Church can effectively take up the task of evangelisation with unity and singleness of heart, like one body. BECs are examples of contrast societies, stemming from the need for the Church to be sustained in adverse situations. Souls coming together in cyberspace to share the Good News can constitute another new way of evangelisation.

The GDC (1998) maintains that participation and partnership can increase the responsibility of an individual in living the very existence of the Church. "The Church exists in order to evangelize" (Paul VI, 1975b, para 14). Three major modes through which every member of the Church can carry out evangelisation are identified and set out below.

### *Modes of Evangelisation*

According to Westerhoff (1981), evangelisation refers to encounters through deeds and words which aid conversions or human transformations in the realms of thought, feeling and behaviour (p. 303). The whole process of evangelisation is accomplished, through three modes of encounter - personal, communitarian and technical. There are various specific instances of encounters where evangelisation takes place and these can be categorised under these three modes.

**Personal Mode** EN argues that personal contact is indispensable for evangelisation. Jesus' personal encounter with Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman and Simon the Pharisee, together with the personal encounters of the apostles, are given as examples of this

mode in EN Person-to person transmission of the experience of the Gospel is identified as a valid, important and even primary mode of evangelisation (Paul VI, 1975b, para 46) Cases of personal encounter are numerous They range in various degrees from the handing on of faith in families by parents, life witnesses of Christian values in society, exhortation, celebration of the sacraments, to the catechesis happening in Sunday schools or in new communities of catechumens An encounter at a one-to-one level is the main characteristic of this mode which also includes friendship, respect for the other individual, witnessing and personal transformation

**Community Mode** This operates more on a one-to-many basis Jesus proclaiming the good news to the crowds (Mt 4 25, Mk 8 2) and the apostles preaching to the multitudes on the day of the Pentecost are examples of this mode of encounter In modern times, retreats, youth groups, Eucharistic celebrations and Gospel choirs are examples of this togetherness for evangelisation At a global level, World Youth Day stands out as an instance where these encounters happen at both vertical and horizontal levels At a vertical level, the love of Jesus and the invitation of the Pope influence young people to come together At a horizontal level, fellowship, personal recognition and a spirit of co-responsibility mutually inspire them to come together The role of the media is emerging as being important in this encounter Music, drama and other literary forms may be used as catalysts in this mode of evangelisation (Wyckoff and Richter, 1982)

**Technological/professional Mode** A third mode of evangelisation, which can be considered comparatively distant, relates to the use of the media EN (Paul VI, 1975b) says that these times are characterised by the mass media as a means of social communication, which is elementary for both the initial proclamation of the Good News and further deepening of faith

Written communication, printed communication and electronic communication are the modes included here where the 'presence' of a person is comparatively virtual. This technical mode can incorporate elements of the two other modes described above. This arises because, on the Internet, a personal presence can be simulated, using electronic symbols. While this presence is not corporeal, people still consider online presence to be very intimate and personal (Details of this online presence are dealt with in chapter 3 on Internet Communication)

EN says that the means of social communications indefinitely increase the area in which the Word of God can be heard. The media is recognised as a powerful means of proclaiming "from the housetops" (Mt 10: 27). The challenge is ever present or ever increasing, according to the newness of the media through them the evangelical message should reach vast numbers of people but with the capacity of piercing the conscience of each individual (Paul VI, 1975b, para 45). This topic, being related more to the technicalities of communication, is probed more deeply in the next chapter. "You too, dear young people, are the receivers and the trustees of this heritage" (John Paul II, 1999b). The relationship of the Church with youth is considered in the context of evangelisation and this new medium of the Internet, in the next section, by reviewing relevant experiences and teachings of two recent Popes, Paul VI and John Paul II.

### **2.3 Pioneers of Modern Evangelisation: Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II**

Pope Paul VI gave a new momentum in the life of the Church by introducing the term evangelisation and Pope John Paul II developed it further in his teachings and practices. Various events in the life of these Popes have been identified as instances of evangelisation in modern times. First of all their teachings concerning the media and youth are considered. The

aim is to identify the development of concepts related to the media and youth during these two papacies in the context of evangelisation

### *Pope Paul VI*

Various teachings and instances from the life of Pope Paul VI are directly relevant to this research. Practical dimensions of Pope Paul VI's relationship with youth and the media are considered below in the light of teachings of the Church during his tenure of office

#### *Enkindle the light of Youth with the Light of Christ*

The message of Pope Paul VI to Youth in Vatican II recognised its essential goodness and the necessity to enkindle it with the light of Christ. He spoke as if the whole council reformation was intended for the youth of the world. "It is for you, youth, especially for you that the Church now comes through her council to enkindle your light, the light which illuminates the future, your future" (Vatican II, 1965g). This Pope's commitment to youth can be traced back to his priestly life as a spiritual advisor to the students of the University of Rome in 1931 (Clancy, 1963). Later, as chaplain of the Federation of Italian Catholic Students (FUCI), he was able to translate the message of the Church in a language intelligible to young people, ensuring that they were open to the intellectual and spiritual discourse of the Church (Hebblethwaite, 1993).

Vatican II appealed to youth to look upon the Church and find the face of Christ, the genuine, humble and wise hero, the prophet of truth and love and the companion and friend of youth (Vatican II, 1965g). This appeal addresses the genuine need of young people for a model and a hero to follow, and the deep longing of youth for friendship.

### *The Desire of the Church's to Journey with Youth*

Paul VI (1975a) also makes a direct address to young people in the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino* on Christian Joy. In the sixth section entitled 'Joy and Hope in the Hearts of the Young' the Church adopts an optimistic approach in trying to understand youth. Although youth is seen as a short-lived period for individuals, it is a permanently recurring period, over generations, being replicated continuously over time. The document identifies 'a correspondence between the soaring impulse of a young person, being young, and the dynamism of the Holy Spirit' (Paul VI, 1975a, para VI)

The same document claims that there is great confusion among many young people arising from materialism trying to present itself as the gateway to the future. This may be true also in relation to contemporary youth. The Church is encouraged to initiate spaces of encounter "between the human being which, for a few decisive years, has youth at his command, and the Church in her permanent spiritual youthfulness" (Paul VI, 1975a, para VI)

This Pope's optimism for youth also rests on the older generation. "Youth will not fail the Church if within the Church there are enough older people able to understand it, to love it, to guide it and to open up to it a future, by passing on to it with complete fidelity the Truth which endures" (Paul VI, 1975a, para VI). This document maintains that 'this generation is waiting for something else', the joy of divine truth. The Church believes that it has the responsibility to make use of the opportunities available through the media of communication to share this joy (Paul VI, 1970). (A more detailed analysis of youth and youth initiatives taken by the Church follows in the next chapter.)

## *Instruments of Social Communications and Young People*

While various pronouncements on the media were made by some of Pope Paul VI's predecessors, the Catholic Church's interest in communication rose to a new level during Vatican II when the council issued a separate decree, *Inter Mirifica* (Vatican II, 1963) This interest of the Church was progressed further in the detailed analysis of the process of communication in *Communio et Progressio* (1971) These two documents begin by identifying the media as 'means of social communications' In contrast to earlier times, in *Communio et Progressio*, communication was seen as an instrument of evangelisation

Christ commanded the Apostles and their successors to "teach all nations" to be "the light of the world" and to announce the Good News in all places at all times

It is now necessary that the same message be carried by the means of social communication that are available today (1971, para 126)

The Pope's experience and the Church's faith in the possibilities of the 'marvellous technical inventions' (Vatican II, 1963, para 1) are obvious also in this document

The modern media offer new ways of confronting people with the message of the Gospel, of allowing Christians even when they are far away to share in sacred rites, worship and ecclesiastical functions In this way they can bind the Christian community closer together and invite everyone to participate in the intimate life of the Church (*Communio et Progressio* 1971, para 128)

The Pope identified Christ as the perfect communicator and incarnation as the perfect form of communication (*Communio et Progressio*, 1971, para 11)

The process of communication and its nuances are discussed in detail in the next chapter (3)

The instruments of Social Communication seem to have an important role to play in the process of evangelisation, especially in relation to youth. The institution of World Communications Day (WCD) by Pope Paul VI in 1967 underlines his lifelong trust in modern technologies and the media of communication. The importance of the evangelisation of young people, which was highlighted repeatedly by this Pope in various WCD speeches, is equally significant. During eight of the eleven consecutive years of WCD, from its start in 1967, he made direct mention of young people. In the 1967, 1969, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1976 and 1978 WCD messages, he used the words 'young people', 'youth' and 'new generations' (Drumm, 2006). This shows that the Church views the media as a significant influence on the development of young people, a point worth noting in the context of the present study. Moreover, a better use of the media can bring significant change in the development of young people. "Young people who have received a solid moral and religious formation and who are inspired by a genuine ideal are therefore to be encouraged to engage in the different activities of social communication" (Paul VI, 1969). According to Pope Paul VI, the Church needs to use the media for evangelisation. He identified dialogue as the method to be adopted by the Church to foster this participation.

#### *Dialogue as a Method of Evangelisation*

*Gaudium et Spes* (Vatican II, 1965f) states that humanity, as well as the Church, by its very origin and foundation, is communitarian. At the same time, unity among members of the human community, as well as the Church, is a key factor for development and salvation. The communitarian character of humanity and its necessity for unity is made possible through interaction which involves an exchange of ideas. Therefore communication is fundamental to achieve interaction between the members of a community. This communitarian aspect of the



Church, which is also an inherent necessity for unity among humanity, as described in Vatican II, is actualised through dialogue among and between human beings and dialogue between them and God. According to *Gaudium et Spes* “This communitarian character is developed and consummated in the work of Jesus Christ. For the very Word made flesh willed to share in the human fellowship” (Vatican II, 1965f, para. 32). Jesus Christ is the zenith of this communication, as discussed earlier, and incarnation is the perfect model of communication (*Communio et Progressio*, 1971, para. 11).

Consequently, “the very nature of the gifts which Christ has given the Church demands that they be extended to others and shared with others. This must be obvious from the words ‘Go, therefore, teach you all nations’ (Mt 28:19)” (Paul VI, 1964, para. 64). A sincere desire to share spiritual patrimony also motivates the Church to have dialogue with the world. Evangelisation motivates the Church to begin dialogue.

Pope Paul’s first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (Paul VI, 1964), as its title indicates, informs the evangelist about the path the Church can take in the modern world. Here the path mentioned by the Pope is one of dialogue. If the main theme of *Ecclesiam Suam* is dialogue, it can be seen also as a recurring theme running through almost all the documents issued during the reign of Pope Paul VI. For example, the documents of Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1965f), *Gravissimum Educationis* (Declaration on Christian Education, 1965b), *Dignitatis Humane* (Declaration on Religious Freedom, 1965e), *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on The Relation of The Church to Non-Christian Religions, 1965c), *Ad Gentes* (Decree on The Mission Activity of The Church, 1965a), directly speak about dialogue (e.g., *Gaudium et Spes*, para. 21, 23, 25, 28, 40, 43, 56,

68, 90, 92, *Gravissimum Educationis*, para 8, 11, *Dignitatis Humane*, para 3, *Nostra Aetate* para 2,4, *Ad Gentes* para 11, 16, 20, 34, 41)

Another important document dealing with dialogue in communication is *Communio et Progressio* (1971), which was discussed earlier. These documents deal with the concept of communication and dialogue as a method for reaching out to the world, as well as an indispensable means of strengthening the bond between her members (*Communio et Progressio*, 1971, para 114, 122) (Further discussion on dialogue is included in chapter 3 )

#### *Evangelisation and Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN)

“Our century is characterised by the mass media or means of social communication, and the first proclamation, catechesis or the further deepening of faith cannot do without these means” (Paul VI, 1975b, para 45). As an encyclical from the Vatican which gave new dynamism and momentum to the fundamental duty of the Church, EN deserves a special mention with regard to media as well as young people.

Circumstances invite us to make special mention of the young. Their increasing number and growing presence in society and likewise the problems assailing them should awaken in every one the desire to offer them with zeal and intelligence the Gospel ideal as something to be known and lived.

(Paul VI, 1975b, para 72)

*Evangelii Nuntiandi* was published by Pope Paul VI (1975b) on the tenth anniversary of the closing of the Vatican Council II. The objective of the last encyclical of Pope Paul VI, as described in EN itself, was to make the Church of the twentieth century ever better equipped to proclaim the Gospel. It urged the Church to revise methods of evangelisation by studying

how the Christian message can be brought to the modern generation His previous experience in 1955 when, as Archbishop of Milan, he proclaimed the Good News to the modern world during the great mission of Milan, may have motivated him to formulate this document (Clancy, 1963, p 102) Fidelity to both the message of the Good News and to modern men and women, to whom the message is to be transmitted, is the central axis of evangelisation (Paul VI, 1975b, para 2-4)

According to EN the presentation of the Gospel is not optional but rather a duty incumbent on the Church by the command of the Lord Jesus (Paul VI, 1975b, para 5)

The document identifies ecclesial communion of churches and hierarchy as being responsible for evangelisation (Paul VI, 1975b, para 60-71) Article 72 is about young people, as their growing presence in society and associated problems compels the Church to evangelise them The necessity of serious preparation for evangelisation is endorsed (para 73-74), while the role of the Holy Spirit as the primary agent of evangelisation is emphasised “Techniques of evangelisation are good, but even the most advanced ones could not replace the gentle action of the Holy Spirit” (para 75) Evangelisation was inaugurated at Pentecost, under the inspiration of the Spirit (para 75) Article 76 speaks about the need for authenticity among those engaged in evangelisation The necessity for reform and an invitation for a renewed fervour in the process of evangelisation are detailed in later Articles

The foregoing discussion has touched on some of the themes in EN which are relevant to this study However, there are a few important issues still to be considered in the context of online evangelisation of youth

### *Quantitative and Qualitative Dimensions of Evangelisation*

It is true that EN endorses the necessity of using the means of social communication for evangelisation “The Church would feel guilty before the Lord if She did not utilise these powerful means that human skill is daily rendering more perfect. It is through them that She proclaims ‘from the housetops’” (Paul VI, 1975b, para 45). As the area in which the word of God is spread increases horizontally, there should also be a vertical increase in the depth of the spreading, “piercing the conscience of each individual, of implanting itself in his heart as though he were the only person being addressed, with all his individual and personal qualities, and evoke an entirely personal adherence and commitment” (para 45). Communicating the Good News calls for quantitative as well as qualitative courses of action. It cannot be claimed that Pope Paul VI had the Internet in mind when he mentioned the challenge of using various means of social communications, as it had not been developed for general use at that time. Even if it seems that a strong, sustained and continuous personal contact can be achieved online, concern about presenting the message of conversion with the vigour of ‘piercing the conscience’ would not be inappropriate (This issue is discussed in more depth in chapter 3 )

In considering the qualitative aspect of evangelisation, another question arises regarding evangelisation and sacramental presence. According to Article 47 “Evangelisation thus exercises its full capacity when it achieves the most intimate relationship, or better still, a permanent and unbroken intercommunion, between the Word and the sacraments” It continues by explaining that “the role of evangelisation is precisely to educate people in the faith in such a way as to lead each individual Christian to live the sacraments as true sacraments of faith” The embodied sacramentality of evangelisation in contrast to the disembodied virtual relationship on the Internet invites serious consideration. These issues

are explored later in chapter 3 Also three questions posed by the Pope in Article 4 of EN seem to be valid in the case of online evangelisation

In our day, what has happened to that hidden energy of the Good News, which is able to have a powerful effect on man's conscience?

To what extent and in what way is that evangelical force capable of really transforming the people of this century?

What methods should be followed in order that the power of the Gospel may have its effect? (Paul VI, 1975b, para 4)

The Church's concern about evangelisation is not a decorative one, as EN comments in Article 20 It is not achieved by applying a thin veneer, but must be undertaken in a vital way, in depth and right to the very core Christian culture should encounter, enter into dialogue with and evangelise other cultures, which is the deep vision of the Church (A detailed analysis of youth culture from a post modern and contemporary perspective is presented in chapter 4 on youth )

Hebblethwaite (1993) describes Pope Paul VI as the first modern Pope This designation is appropriate to him, given his unprecedented approach in addressing the world, its modernity and related issues for the Church His interest in the media of communication, the proclamation of Christian and human values against opposing cultural tides and his sincere concern about the integral development of young people, were three main interests of his life This trio of interests, together with his teachings inform this research more than any other events in his eventful life His method of dialogue opened new paths of evangelisation During the last decade of the papacy of Paul VI, the Internet, an innovative way of communication, was evolving towards its present shape and revolutionising communications

By the end of the same decade, Karol Wojtyła was elected Pope to continue the mission of Paul VI with whom he was associated during Vatican II.

### *John Paul II*

In one of the longest papacies ever, Pope John Paul II led the Church into the new millennium with realism and confidence. Much of the writings of John Paul II are relevant to young people and the media. For example, his Apostolic Letter *The Rapid Development* states: “This is especially true for young people, who show a natural propensity towards technological innovations, and as such are in even greater need of education in the responsible and critical use of the media” (John Paul II, 2005, para. 11). A collaborative participation of youth in the management and administration of the media was suggested by the Pope in promoting dialogue to bring reciprocal knowledge, peace and solidarity in the world. Major themes identified in the teachings and life of Pope John Paul II are now considered.

### *Evangelisation of Youth*

The pontificate of John Paul II tells the entire Church that the future of evangelisation is centred on young people. That is why he wrote in *The Threshold of Hope*: “The Church looks to the youth with particular hope for a new evangelisation” (John Paul II, 1994a, p. 118). This is because young people are the future of the Church, as well as of the world. As this Pope has identified the goodness of youth at a profound level, he invests his hope for the future of the Church in the treasure of youth. He exhorts the whole Church to be aware of this discovery: “The Church and its each member should strive for a discovery, a discovery of the fundamental importance of youth” (John Paul II, 1994a, p. 119). His own discovery of youth made him look at it from the following perspectives.

**Youth as Treasure:** The importance of youth, together with its social and psychological implications, in the theology and ministry in the Church, was highlighted in the apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II on the occasion of International Youth Year in 1985. In this letter the Pope describes Youth as a special treasure in discovering the human “I” with its unrepeatable and concrete properties and capacities inscribed with the whole plan of future life (John Paul II, 1985b, para. 7-9).

**Youth as Growth:** In the same letter, *Dilecti Amici*, the Pope describes the process of growth and its potential, recalling the youthful years of Jesus of Nazareth (John Paul II, 1985b, para. 7-9). He views this as the growth of all the energies through which normal human individuality is built. It is at an upward stage, unlike the downward stage of the growth of adults whose youth is already behind them. He affirms that contact with the visible world and nature is a necessary factor for this growth to bring with it the gradual accumulation of all that is true, good and beautiful (John Paul II, 1985b, para. 51). For young people in the contemporary world, growth and development seem to be strongly intertwined with the virtual reality of the Internet, whereas the older generation grew up dealing with nature and modes of its physical existence. In his letter, he invites the pastors of the Church to show young people the path of “growth”. In order to achieve this, it can be said that pastors need to understand the Internet, enabling them to engage with young people online. This could be as an implicit invitation for Youth Ministry to be undertaken on the Internet even though it was only in the initial stages at that time. (John Paul II, 1985b, para. 55).

Based on his personal experience of youthfulness and his role as a pastor in Poland in the early years of his priestly life, he acquired a very deep understanding of young people. Having a deep love for them, he came across the paradox that “Young people are the same

ever” (John Paul II, 1994a, p 118) However they grow up in different contexts He stressed the difference in their current context which again reveals his understanding of the universal reality of contemporary youth A theology of youth ministry also needs to consider youth historically, identifying its historical constants and variants A study of youth in the context of various cultural realities across the globe is also required, as explained in the next chapter

As the future of evangelisation is centred on young people, he urges the Church to discover the treasures of youth This suggests that he has identified these treasures, having studied them very closely in anthropological, psychological, historical and sociological perspectives and interpreted the findings in the light of the Gospel The findings of his analysis of youth are reflected in his teachings Youth evangelisation is a rich seam that runs through all the activities of Pope John Paul II

### *Youth as Leading Characters of Evangelisation*

John Paul’s wisdom and understanding of young people is indicative of a deeper vision when he says, “Youth must not simply be considered as an object of pastoral concern for the Church but as ‘leading characters in evangelisation and participants in the renewal of society’” (John Paul II, 1988, para 46) The possibility of a dialogue between youth culture and the Church is opened up in the same document

The Church has so much to talk about with youth, and youth have so much to share with the Church This mutual dialogue, by taking place with great cordiality, clarity and courage, will provide a favourable setting for the meeting and exchange between generations, and will be a source of richness and youthfulness for the Church and civil society (John Paul II, 1988, para 46)



Is it possible to have a favourable setting where the Church and youth can have a mutual dialogue ‘with great cordiality, clarity and courage’? In the Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities, Pope John Paul II, in a series of seven articles, proposing cultural dialogue and evangelisation in universities, observes that, “By its very nature, each Catholic University makes an important contribution to the Church’s work of evangelisation” (John Paul II, 1990a, para 49)

“Then I saw them swarming through the city, happy as young people should be, but also thoughtful, eager to pray, seeking “meaning” and true friendship,” (John Paul II, 2001a, para 9) The Pope’s optimism regarding young people was clearly expressed in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, promulgated at the closing of the Great Jubilee. In young people, ‘whatever their possible ambiguities’, the Pope identified a ‘profound longing for genuine values which find their fullness in Christ’. In his commitment to young people, John Paul II offered Jesus Christ, as their supreme friend and teacher of all genuine friendship, to accompany them in their life (John Paul II, 2001a, para 9)

John Paul II viewed youth as ‘leading characters’ in the process of evangelisation and participants in the renewal of society. Dialogue, which is a form of communication, can be used by the Church to initiate and deepen this partnership. Thus communication becomes vital for both the Church and for youth. In documents such as *Ecclesia in Asia* (John Paul II, 1999c), *Ecclesia in Europa* (John Paul II, 2003), *Ecclesia in Oceania* (John Paul II, 2001d) and *Ecclesia in Africa* (John Paul II, 1995) the Pope envisioned the settings where youth evangelisation could be accomplished. He chose these Apostolic Exhortations to speak about the differences in the context of the Church in these changing geographical and cultural realities. Details of these changes are discussed in chapter 4 on Youth.

*Called To Behold the Young (World Youth Day)*

On the day he inaugurated his pontificate, Pope John Paul II began his dialogue with youth saying, “You are the hope of the Church! You are my hope!” (cited in Rylko, 1998, p 170)

The evangelisation of young people was a mission personally taken up by Pope John Paul II. In the Apostolic Letter to the Youth of the World on the Occasion of International Youth Year, the Pope wrote

You are the youth of nations and societies, the youth of every family and of all humanity, you are the youth of the Church so your youth is not just your own property. It is possession of humanity itself (John Paul II, 1985b, para 1)

Bishop Stanislaw Rylko (1998), then Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, says that the Pope challenges the results of sociological research and surveys which paint a dark picture of contemporary youth. In *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, the Pope observed that “in youth there is an enormous potential for good and creative ability” (cited in Rylko, 1998, p 171). In them he saw a great prophetic force. The Pope wants to involve young people, with their prophetic dynamism, in the great work of new evangelisation in the world today. Rylko views this as the vision of a father and a friend who looks into the depths of the hearts of young people today and who is able to go beyond appearances, even when these are negative (Rylko, 1998, p 171). On the occasion of the institution of World Youth Day (WYD) in 1985, the Pope explained the reason for his decision: “Every young person must feel accompanied by the Church. This is why the whole Church, united with the Successor of Peter, must feel more deeply committed at the global level to youth” (cited in Rylko, 1998, p 172).

This is a key theme of this whole study. The Pope wants young people to be accompanied by the Church. He envisages this accompaniment as a commitment by the members of the Church on a global level to journey with young people in a genuine way. The global presence of the Catholic Church and the global reality of the medium of the Internet seem to complement the ministry of accompaniment envisioned by this Pope. John Paul II's vision of accompaniment is evidenced in WYDs where, since their inception, anywhere between three million and five million young people gather in one place and at one time to see and hear the Pope (Trigliano et al. 2006, p. 276). One clear setting of youth evangelisation identified by the Pope merits particular mention here: the media of communication, considered briefly in the next section.

### *Media as a Virtual Areopagus*

Like his predecessor Paul VI, John Paul II was acutely aware of the enormous possibilities of the media as a means of presenting the Word of God. Throughout his life, he was like a medium transmitting the Good News to millions, especially to young people. The relationship between the innovative global network of the Internet and the 2000-year-old history of the Church is next for consideration.

As a child, John Paul II had such a strong experience of a cultural centre at the town square that later, when he became Pope, he referred to the modern media as the first *areopagus* of the modern age.

After preaching in a number of places, St. Paul arrived in Athens, where he went to the *areopagus* and proclaimed the Gospel. The first *areopagus* of the modern age is the world of communications, which is unifying humanity and turning it into what is known as a 'global village' (John Paul II, 1990b, para. 37(c)).

Just as the first cultural interaction between Christianity and stoicism occurred, in the space of *areopagus*, cyberspace can be seen as the space for cultural interaction to occur in the present day. This is evident from his references to *areopagus* in the encyclicals *Fides et Ratio* (John Paul II, 1998a), *Redemptoris Missio* (John Paul II, 1990b), Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (John Paul II, 1994b), Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, (John Paul II, 1995) and the Apostolic Letter *Rapid Development* (John Paul II, 2005). The importance of this concept was reiterated in the Pope's use of the term in his messages on the occasion of various communication days (1998, 2000, 2005).

When John Paul II was elected Pope in 1978, the Internet itself was in its infancy. From the sending of the first e-mail in the early 1970s, this concept developed and spread (Peter, 2004). 'The Internet' was discussed by Pope John Paul II for the first time at a public meeting in a homily given on World Communications Day, 2001. Almost two months before that, in a homily at a meeting of the conferees of Social Communications, the Pope addressed them about the emerging media culture and the preparation of the document *Ethics in Internet*: "I am pleased that in these days you have been considering a similar document on the theme of Ethics in Internet, which would indeed be very timely, given the rapid spread of cyber-communications and the many moral questions involved" (John Paul II, 2001b). This is the first time in the history of the Church that a Pope used the word 'cyber-communications' at an official meeting.

John Paul II was the first Pope to have an e-mail address: *john\_paul\_ii@vatican.va* (Tschabitscher, 2007). It was significant that he was the Pope of the Millennium, when the Internet and communications technology were changing the whole concept of communication. The Pope's understanding of this development seems to be reflected in the

publication of two documents from the Pontifical Council for Social Communications *Ethics in Internet* (Foley, 2002b) and *The Church and Internet* (Foley, 2002a) The Apostolic Letter of John Paul II *Rapid Development* (John Paul II, 2005) is another important document addressed to those who are responsible for the media

**Virtuous and the Virtual - The Church and the Internet** “Christ is both the content and the dynamic source of the Church's communications in proclaiming the Gospel” (John Paul II, 1992, para 6) John Paul II traces the history of communication to the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and, with the gift of tongues, restored the communication which had collapsed at Babel “Pentecost is only the beginning Even when threatened with reprisals, the Apostles are not deterred from proclaiming the Lord ‘We cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard (Acts 4 20)’” (John Paul II, 2000a)

As an institution with a 2000 year history during which communication played an integral part, the question facing the Church in relation to the latest development in the world of communication, the Internet, is explored in this research The document of Pontifical Council for Social Communications *Aetatis Novae* (John Paul II, 1992) identified five constructive ways in which the Church can avail of the media to present Christ as ‘the content and dynamic source’ (1) At the service of persons and cultures, (2) At the service of dialogue with the world, (3) At the service of human community and progress, (4) At the service of ecclesial communion and (5) At the service of a new evangelisation (para 6-11) These five dynamic ways can be captured in the two phrases, the Church *ad intra* (the Church in itself) and the Church *ad extra* (the Church in relation to the world) (Hebblethwaite, 1993, p 311) The Catholic Church is a communion of persons, families, parishes, dioceses, and churches

Again the Pastoral Instruction *Aetatis Novae* teaches that “communication mirrors the Church’s own communion and is capable of contributing to it” (John Paul II, 1992, para 6) The existence of the Church *ad intra* as well as *ad extra* shares one common purpose, namely evangelisation

In relation to the document of the Council for Social Communications, issued ten years after *Aetatis Novae*, Foley (2002a) observed that “The Church has a twofold aim in regard to the media” (para 3), in relation to the world outside the Church, as well as in relation to the communication in and by the Church herself “ how is the Church to adapt its mission to the particular age, environment, educational and social conditions of men's lives?” as Pope Paul VI (1964) asked much earlier in *Ecclesiam Suam* (Paul VI, 1964, para 86) Dialogue seems to be the appropriate method to be adopted here It is essential that “new pathways of dialogue between the Church and the cultures of our period be forged This dialogue is absolutely indispensable for the Church, because otherwise evangelisation will remain a dead letter” (John Paul II, 1983a, para 4) The Church and the Internet seem to possess some similar characteristics Both exist on a global level, both have human participation as their source of strength, communication is a vital element of both of these global entities Some questions still remain Is the Internet a space for dialogue? Can dialogue be initiated and sustained fruitfully on the Internet? Can friendship be initiated and sustained in virtual space?

Before concluding this review of the teachings of John Paul II two other issues need to be considered in relation to evangelisation- language and culture

### *The Problem of Language in Evangelisation*

Pope John Paul II has observed that “the human capacity for language made the human world, including the world of literature, possible” (cited in Weigel, 2005, p 40) Evangelisation as ‘transmitting revelation’ (GDC, 1998, para 39) can be considered as a continuation of Revelation In this *New Heaven* and *New Earth* of the Information Age, is there any change in the basic formula for revelation? The culmination of God’s self communication is in Jesus (Vatican II, 1965d, para 2) Evangelisation, as the continuation of revelation, is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow - sharing the Good News The primordial substance of evangelisation is the same It is the Son of Man, the Saviour, the Good News, the Logos, the Messiah, the redeemer What is different in the process of evangelisation as signified by these various titles for the one Son of Man? While the difference in language is obvious, the difference in meaning is subtle, depending on the context in which these names evolved

John Paul II (2001a) refers to Jesus Christ as the supreme friend of youth (para 9) While the Logos from Greek philosophy assumes yet another name, the substance is the same Jesus Christ The language is different, as the language of proclamation varies according to time and space As Christological, anthropological as well as cultural dimensions of evangelisation emerge at this juncture, Cardinal Avery Dulles advises that, “evangelisation must be heralded with new energy and in a style and language adapted to the people of our day” (Dulles, 2006, p 5)

## *Reading the Signs of the Time and the Problem of Culture in Evangelisation*

In order to carry out its task of evangelisation, the Church has to go through a process in two steps (a) reading the signs of the time and (b) interpreting them in the light of the Gospel in a language which is intelligible to each generation

These two activities do not exhaust the process of evangelisation, as will be seen in later sections. Rather they constitute its initial stages. The task of the Church is to bring good news or, in one word, 'evangelise'. The signs of the times can be read in many ways. By observing young people, interacting with them and through friendship, an evangeliser can get to know their yearnings and aspirations.

Your role is great, because you must help the Church to become a creator of culture in its relationship with the modern world. We would be unfaithful to our mission to evangelise the present generations, if we left Christians without an understanding of new cultures. (John Paul II, 1983a, para. 10)

Young people are like the fig tree in the Gospel of Mark, "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know the summer is near" (Mk 13:28). At a different level, in order to understand 'the dramatic features of the world in which we live' (Vatican II, 1965f, para. 4), one has to understand the culture of young people and traverse the path they travel. Also learning about the media and taking part in it can be a way of becoming familiar with the salient features of our time.

The second task in the process of evangelisation is interpreting the observations made from reading the signs. This interpretation happens both through the light of the Gospel and the teachings and traditions of the Church. Its purpose is to answer the ever recurring questions



of the meaning of this present life, the meaning of the life to come, and the relationship between them. Pope John Paul II has addressed these perennial questions in his conference with young people. If the evangelisation is aimed at young people, the answers need to be intelligible to them. A major issue for this research centres on how to reformulate the message of the Good News, which the Church wishes to convey, in a language that is intelligible to contemporary youth.

John Paul II brought new zeal and energy to evangelisation by re-interpreting it in the context of contemporary culture. The term 'new evangelisation' itself signifies the need for renewal of the methods used in evangelisation. "Look to the future with commitment to a New Evangelisation, one that is new in its fervour, new in its methods, and new in its expression" (John Paul II, 1983b). Since the concept of new evangelisation involves dealing with the new culture, it is discussed in the chapters on the Internet and on youth.

In his work, *Witness to Hope*, George Weigel (2005, p. 18) quotes the motto "*Veni, vidi, Deus vicit* (I came, I saw, God conquered)" used by Polish troops in 1683. The same slogan can be attributed to the papacy of the first Polish Pope. Wojtyla came, he saw, God conquered young people through him. John Paul II (1988) exhorted young people to 'go into the vineyard too' (Mt 20:4) (*Christifideles Laici*, para. 2). More recently, he asked the Church to 'put out into the deep' (Lk 5:4) of cyberspace, endorsing the objective of this study (John Paul II, 2002, para. 2).

## **2.4 Summary and Conclusions**

Evangelisation was the theme of this chapter. The first section put the research in context identifying evangelisation, youth and the Internet as its main three spheres of interest.

Accordingly the study of evangelisation presented here is primarily in the context of how it relates to youth and communication, including the Internet. Following on from this, a comprehensive examination of evangelisation was presented. The final section focussed on the life and work of two modern Church leaders, Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II. Their teachings in relation to the media and youth were explored in detail.

In the course of the discussion, the etymology and various definitions of evangelisation were explored. Ontological aspects of evangelisation were considered, together with some of its essential elements. As it was established that it has both a sacramental and a non-sacramental dimension, this means that cyber-space can be a medium for evangelisation.

The next part of the debate focussed on ecclesial aspects of evangelisation. The Internet, with its global reach and capacity for interactivity, could enable a more participative mode of communication. The operation of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) was reviewed. Essentially they are new ways of helping people to grow in their faith. It is submitted that cyberspace provides another new path for evangelisation.

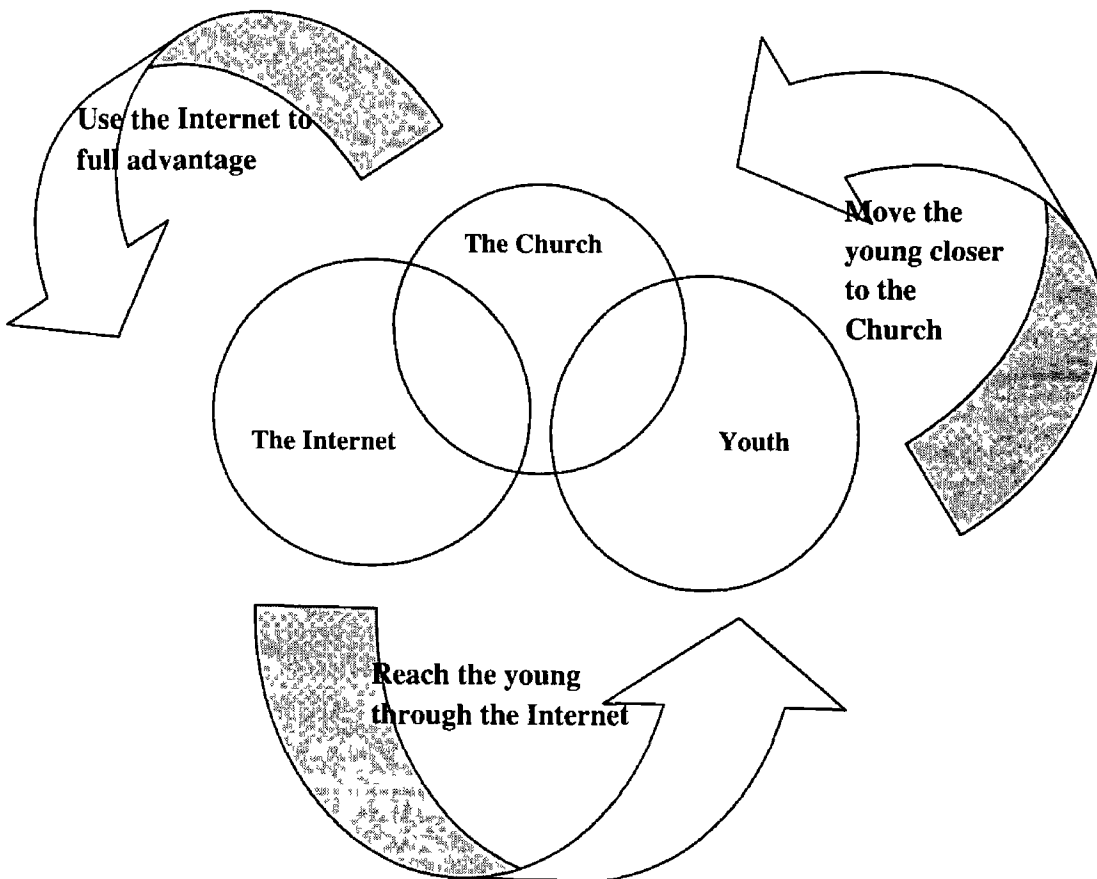
Three major modes of evangelisation – personal (one-to-one), communitarian (preaching to groups) and technological (use of the media) were explored. While the latter technological mode may not be as personal as the other two, it has the capacity to reach vast numbers of people. In addition, it can facilitate smaller groups, interacting in a more intimate manner.

The review of life and works of Pope Paul VI established his deep interest in the media and in youth, both in his earlier life and in his teachings during his papacy. His successor, John Paul II, shared his commitment to young people. His inauguration of an annual World Youth Day

in 1985 endorsed his particular emphasis on youth and evangelisation. The review of this Pope's teachings also highlighted his great interest in the world of communications. His writings endorsed his deep appreciation of the enormous possibilities of the modern media as a means of presenting the word of God. He was the first pope to encounter the world of cyberspace.

In sum, the fundamental importance of evangelisation in the Church has been established in this chapter. This research is a journey to bring the mystery of the Incarnate Word into the cultural matrix of the Internet in order to reach the world of youth. The findings on evangelisation, particularly as it relates to youth and the media, seem consonant with this goal. This forward journey is depicted in Fig 2.2 below.

**Fig 2.2 Various Currents Involved in the Onward Journey of the Church**



Participation in the Internet may open dynamic spaces facilitating intellectual and spiritual encounters between the Church and young people. The global presence of the Catholic Church and the global reality of the medium of the Internet seem to be complementary to the ministry of accompaniment envisioned by Pope John Paul II. Communication is also a common denominator between the Church and youth as participants in the common goal of renewal of society. Therefore this is an instance where the spheres of the Church, youth and the Internet can come together in sharing the common pursuits of human existence.

Evangelisation is the purpose of both the internal and external communication of the Church. Dialogue founded on friendship can be a vehicle of evangelisation in this age of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Souls coming together in cyberspace to share the Good News may open innovative ways of evangelisation.

In order to get a fuller appreciation of the opportunities for evangelisation afforded by the internet, this modern medium of communication is explored in depth in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE CHARACTERISTICS AND POTENTIAL OF THE INTERNET AS A MEANS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

In the previous chapter communication was shown to be essential to the Church, arising from this vital role in evangelisation. An analysis of the concept of communication is the focus in this chapter. The first part deals with communication at a general level while the second part explores communication on the Internet. This is followed by a review of some online religious initiatives.

#### 3.1 Communication

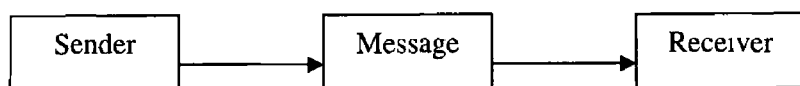
Beginning with a broad review of communication, the concept is explored in detail in this section. Then various theories on the topic are set. Other aspects considered are mechanical approaches to communication, multimedia communication and models of communication.

##### *Communication: An Overview*

McClave (1997) defines communication as the process by which ideas, information, opinions, attitudes and feelings are conveyed from one person to another. In daily life, a person uses different ways of communication as a means of expression. Ideas and events can be expressed through verbal language and sound. Also they can be in written codified symbols of a language. In addition there is non-verbal communication which uses human senses, signs, symbols and sounds. Ideas can be encapsulated in pictures and drawings, diagrams and other symbols. Methods of communication involving technology are used by both institutions and individuals. Overall, these are the forms of communication used to

express ideas (Pearson and Nelson, 2000, p 76) Fig 3 1 below shows a simple model of communication where the sender is a person who initiates communication by sending a message (Gray and Starke, 1988, p 387) The receiver is a person who completes the process by receiving the message

**Fig 3 1 Simple Form of Communication**



According to Pearson and Nelson (2000), communication can be classified in five categories

- a) *Intrapersonal* This refers to communication happening within the self,
- b) *Interpersonal* The communicative exchange which occurs when two people engage in communication is called an interpersonal communication,
- c) *Group* This is the communication involved with a collection of individuals who share some common attributes,
- d) *Mass* This form of communication refers primarily to the scale of communication arising from the institutional practices of the mass media engaged in the industrial production and circulation of meaning,
- e) *Extrapersonal* This category covers communication between machines, with little human intervention (p 76-77)

Turning to the Internet, an analysis of communication in relation to this medium shows that it includes elements of the above categories Online communication involves both the *interpersonal* and *group* categories and it can include some elements of *mass* communication Also, since there is a subjective element in Internet communication, it can help *intrapersonal* communication As we are considering communication which occurs between human beings,

machine assisted *extrapersonal* communication is not discussed here. Before moving on to the new form of communication online, some theories of communication are considered next.

### *Theories of Communication*

There are various definitions of communication. For the School of Mass Communication, it is the act of imparting, conferring or delivering messages, such as words or ideas, within or between groups of people (Demers, 2005, p. 57). According to this school, the most popular statement about the process of communication comes from political scientist Lasswell (1948) who said that the best way to study communication was to answer five questions, as set out below:

#### *Lasswell Model of Communication*

A simple model of communication, involving the message, sender and receiver, was studied and graphically represented by Harold Lasswell in 1948. It is known as the Lasswell formula: *Who says what to whom in which channel and with what effect?* The act of communication is considered comprehensively in this model. As the Lasswell model seems to represent a basic and common form of human communication, the questions raised by him are applicable to any communication. In *A Social History of the Media from Gutenberg to the Internet*, Briggs and Burke (2005) refer to the influence of the Lasswell formula when forming their social concept of communication:

We have been influenced at the outset by the simple but deservedly famous classical formula of the American political scientist Harold Lasswell (1902-78), describing communication in terms of who says what to whom in which channel and with what effect (p. 4).

In the context of this research, the answer, based on the Lasswell model, is The Church wants to convey the message of the Good News to the young through the channel of the Internet, with the effect of deepening faith. Although there is some criticism<sup>1</sup> of these linear models which represent a one-way process, the elements included in the process need to be considered as they identify the fundamental features involved in any communication.

Another study by Danesi (2000) captures communication according to the mode of delivery. According to this observer, in the human species, communication can include the following modes of delivery: gesture, i.e., the use of hands, vocal, i.e., the use of vocal organs, writing, i.e., the use of pictures or graphic symbols, visual, i.e., painting, sculpting etc., mechanical, i.e., radio, computers, television etc., signalling, i.e., body signal emission (natural or intentional) (p. 58). This brief overview of new theories on communication highlights the complexity of the topic. Further insights into communication are now considered.

### *Mechanical Approaches to Communication*

Communication happening on the Internet can be defined as Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). Among the six modes of communications identified by Danesi (2000), where would CMC occur? It is not wrong to say that the communication happening on the Internet is mechanical, at least in part. The mechanical or technical features of communication were studied for the first time by Claude E. Shannon (cited in Guizzo, 2003). Warren Weaver developed the mathematical laws governing the transmission, reception and processing of information. Another linear model of communication, which is similar to the Lasswell formula, was developed by Shannon and Weaver a year after Lasswell's. It is

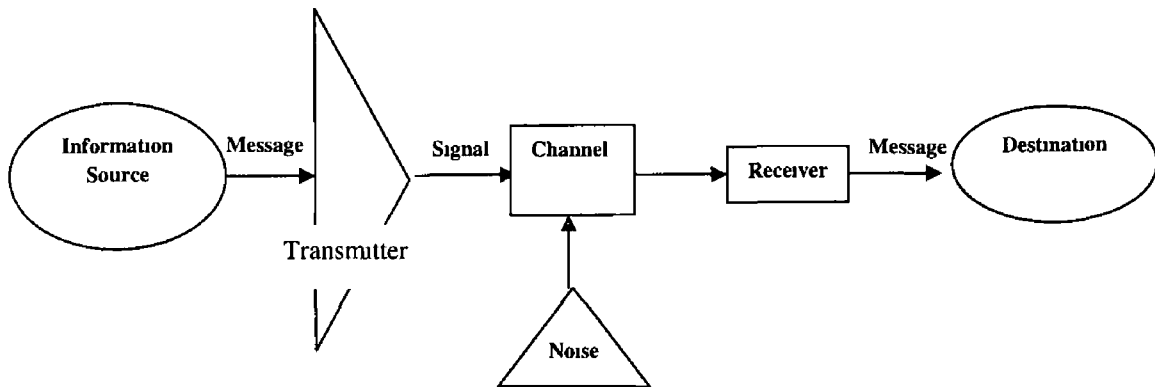
---

<sup>1</sup> 'Communication is not a unilateral transfer of information from person to another, from sender to receiver, as if it were a monologue. That understanding sometimes called the transportation model – is too linear and implies that the receiver is passive and not involved in the process beyond simply receiving what is sent' (Granfield, P. 1994, p. 3)



intended to be a scientific guide to the possibilities of sending a message This model (Fig 3.2) is considered to be the most influential of all the early transmission or mechanical models

**Fig 3.2 Shannon & Weaver Model of Communication**



Source Pearson and Nelson, 2000, p 79

In any communication, the communicator or source of information is important In the same way the message, channel of communication, external or internal interruption of any kind which hinders the intended message reaching the target, e g , noise, as in the above model, must be taken in account The receiver of the message also plays an important role in the process of communication The Shannon and Weaver model adds more elements to the Lasswell model One is the importance of the ‘transmitter’ In online communication, a personal web page where the message of the Good News appears is the transmitter Next is the ‘noise’ This represents the adverse factors or challenges that need to be considered in formulating the message in a manner which is comprehensible to young people A postmodern youth is continuously bombarded with all kinds of information from the world of technology New gadgets such as ipods, mobile phones, palm tops with the Internet etc , create a virtual world around them, ready to impart information and provide them with various forms of entertainment

### ***Multimedia Communication***

Communication on the Internet is not just a mechanical one, as mentioned above. It is a combination of various modes. Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) is a multi-media communication. The term *multimedia* is derived from two Latin words, *multum*, meaning multiple and *medius* meaning middle. The Medium has three modes: *Artifactual* media (books, paintings, sculptures and letters) – artifactual mode of encoding and decoding a message, *mechanical* media (telephones, radios, television sets, computers and videos) – mechanical means of transmitting a message, *natural* media (the voice - speech, the face - expressions and the body - gesture, posture, etc.) – the natural means of encoding and decoding a message (Danesi, 2000, p. 142)

When it is said that the Internet can support multimedia, it means that it uses multiple forms of information content and information processing (e.g., text, audio, graphics, animation, video, interactivity) to inform or entertain the (user) audience (Castells, 2000, p. 394). Therefore the scientific model of communication, as proposed by Shannon and Weaver, is not sufficient to explain fully all of the nuances of communication occurring online, since online communication covers a combination of various modes of communication. An amalgam of all these models is required to explain various aspects of the medium of the Internet. This suggests that the Internet is not just a medium but rather a collection of media. Its enormity and capacity to hold vast amounts of data and information, as well as its capacity for retrieval of instances of interaction, makes it a unique 'medium'.

### ***Models of Communication***

Early models of communication have evolved over time. This can be seen from the works of Pearson and Nelson (2000) who identify four models. They are

- a) *The Action Model* This model reflects a notion that communication happens when one person sends a message and another person or group of persons receive it without giving any feedback
- b) *The Interaction Model* Here the sender sends a message and the receiver receives it and responds with another message
- c) *The Transaction Model* In the transaction model, communicators simultaneously send and receive messages
- d) *The Constructivist Model* This model posits that receivers create their own reality in their minds. The sender sends symbols to be interpreted and the receiver constructs his or her own meaning. According to Pearson and Nelson (2000), this model significantly reframes the communication process.

For the purpose of this research, the last model seems to be more relevant, considering the parties involved with perhaps cultural differences, their freedom of interpretation and their ability to negotiate. This appears to capture what occurs during a communication between two parties who are involved in important communication. The forum model proposed by Granfield (1994) shares similar concepts as it holds that there is a dynamic relationship between the sender and the receiver. The receiver actively participates in this dialogic exchange on the basis of experience, understanding and interpretation.

The discussion now moves on to a more detailed explanation of the Internet, providing a clearer understanding of online communication.

### 3.2 Unweaving the Web

An overview of the Internet is presented in this section. It commences with a definition of the Internet. This is followed by an explanation of its origin and development, how it works and its major uses. Then, various other aspects of the net are delineated. Next, interactivity and relationship in CMC are examined together with some concerns about cyber communication.

#### *The Internet*

The word 'Internet' is the abbreviated form of 'International Network'. There are numerous definitions of the Internet. The conventional definition describes it as the global network of computer networks (Martin, 1997, p. 295) where a network is a group of connected computers that exchange information and share equipment. The following description, which reflects the technical and scientific definition of the term "Internet", is given by The Federal Networking Council (FNC): "Internet" refers to the global information system that

- (i) is logically linked together by a globally unique address space based on the Internet Protocol (IP) or its subsequent extensions/follow-ons,
- (ii) is able to support communications using the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) suite or its subsequent extensions/follow-ons, and/or other IP-compatible protocols, and
- (iii) provides, uses or makes accessible, either publicly or privately, high level services layered on the communications and related infrastructure described herein (Federal networking Council (FNC), 1995)<sup>2</sup>

In his book *A Brief History of the Future*, Naughton (1999) provides an interesting perspective on the Internet.

---

<sup>2</sup> Many of the functions of the FNC were transferred in the year 1997 to the Large Scale Networking (LSN) group and other Interagency Working Groups (IWG) and the website of FNC has been changed to [www.itrd.gov](http://www.itrd.gov) (Federal Networking Council, 1995).

The Net is really a system which links together a vast number of computers and the people who use them. It is the phenomenon of hundreds of millions of people freely communicating via such an efficient and uncensored medium that gives the Net its special character, and its extraordinary power (p 40)

An overview of the history and development of the Internet now follows

### *Origin and Development of the Internet*

The seeds of the Internet were planted in 1969 when the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the US Department of Defence began connecting computers at different universities and defence contractors. The creation of a large computer network was undertaken in order to survive a nuclear attack or other disaster (Naughton, 1999)

The invention of packet switching in the year 1964 by the RAND corporation in U S led to the formation of the first wide area network (WAN) in 1968. Later, the Pentagon funded the connection of a four-node network called ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network). The network grew slowly and the first public demonstration took place in 1972, linking forty machines. In 1973, the network crossed the Atlantic to Norway and England (Martin, 1997, p 294). The growth of the Internet has been a continuous and rapid process from 1973 onwards with the development of TCP/IP-the specifications of its working and features such as E-mail, Usenet, Telnet, FTP etc in due course. Next a short description is given of how the Internet works

### *How the Internet Works*

Technically, the Internet works like a pipeline that exchanges text, data files, and programmes from one user to another. It uses a set of rules and procedures known as protocols to control timing and data format. The set of commands and timing specifications used by the Internet is called Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol, usually abbreviated as TCP/IP. Internet activity can be defined as computers communicating with other computers, using TCP/IP. It works by converting the messages into small data packets when they are sent and reassembling them at their destination (Cowpertwait and Flynn, 2002, p 423 )

The basic architecture of the Internet is what is known as a client/server model. A server, a computer running special software capable of sharing files with other systems, hosts a range of services such as e-mail and web pages that are accessed by client software running on a remote computer. An Internet Service Provider (ISP) is required to access these services and files. It operates a network using common software rules, or protocols, and this is linked to other networks and agreements to pass traffic between them. This combination of networks comprises the Internet which consists of two main parts, the hardware or communications network and the protocols governing data transfer across that network (Whittaker, 2002). Next the main uses of the Internet are described.

### *Major Uses of the Internet*

Email as a new means of communicating around the world, File Transfer Protocol (FTP) and Usenet, as new forms of acquiring information for educational development, and Internet Relay Chat (IRC) as a popular real-time and interactive communication tool among teenagers, make the Internet a very innovative communication medium. Thus this research

study sets out to show that this new age technology can become an effective tool for the Church, enabling Her to play a significant role in the development of young people

As cyberspace becomes part of daily life for more and more computer users, the uses of the Internet are on the increase. These include online services of many companies for e-commerce, electronic banking and, obviously, ministry in the Church. In other words, as Michael Heim describes it, “computers stick the windows of the soul behind monitors, headsets and datasuits” (Heim, 1993, p. 101). According to Naughton (1994), “The Net is already changing the way we communicate. It challenges traditional notions of sovereignty. Like all powerful technologies it has an immense capacity for both good and evil” (p. 44-45).

#### *Characteristics of the Medium of the Internet*

*Seamlessness* describes the facility in the Internet to link related concepts infinitely. This facility to move users from one document to another, following highlighted sub-topics of their choice, is one of the defining characteristics of the Internet. It is known as hyperlinking or hypertext linking and provides a top class cross-referencing service. The links may be within the same page, on the same site or anywhere in the world (Williams and Nicholas, 2001). Talbot (1995) captures the nature of hypertext linking: “Clearly, a generation raised on adventure and video games—where every door conceals a treasure or a monster worth pursuing in frenetic style—has its own way of appreciating the hypertext interface” (p. 13).

Issues of authenticating data and information overload, together with difficulties in navigation due to opening up new windows, come into play when using hypertext. The vast

amounts of knowledge and its seamless nature, with an unprecedented association of related topics, make the Internet an immense space providing new venues to explore each moment

Other important attractions of the Internet are currency and speed of delivery. Anything which is posted on the Internet reaches the end user more quickly than all the traditional news wires. Currency is a highly rated information need. The global reach of the Internet has had its greatest impact. Accessing documents located on the other side of the planet is as easy as it is for those on a web server in the same building. The development of audio and video, enabling users to tune in to what were previously local radio and TV stations, has added enormously to the global nature of the Internet. A negative result of the global reach of the Net is the facility to disseminate racist, sexist and other extremist information to the world. Some other features of the Internet now follow

**Egalitarianism** In their book, *The Internet and the changing Information Environment*, researchers Williams and Nicholas (2001) report that some people champion the Internet for its egalitarianism. According to this view, on the web, everybody is equal

**Comprehensiveness** The Web is considered to be a Pandora's box. Many factors contribute to the Internet's growing subject and topic inclusivity. They are (a) Growth of organisational web sites of all kinds, including governmental, commercial, academic and non-profit making, (b) Migration of information from one format to another such as pamphlet or other printed copy, to an electronic format, (c) Growth of personal information and communication and its embrace of academic, professional, personal and leisure sources (Williams and Nicholas, 2001, p 23-28)



**Two-way Interactivity of the Internet** Manuel Castels (2000) states that the Internet, in its different incarnations and unfolding manifestations, is already the universal, interactive computer communication medium of the information age. The interactive aspects of the Internet have enhanced its appeal as a truly different and alternative phenomenon from other media. Types of interactivity include bulletin boards hosting readers' fora on various subjects and chat rooms. Here, a user is able to engage in dialogue with another user, generally by means of a text-based or image-based interface. When we consider the current young generation, this interactivity is of great importance.

While the communication that can take place through letters, e-mail, etc. lacks the quality of face-to-face communication, it is not quantitatively as large as that in mass communication. Therefore it is labelled *Medio* Communication coming between direct, face-to-face address and mass communication (Watson and Hill, 2006). In this study, the terms 'cyberspace communication' or 'online communication' will be used as appropriate, rather than the term 'Medio'. Some characteristics of the Internet of particular relevance to this research are considered now.

### ***The Internet as Convergence***

In Neuman's view, "the argument that the media are converging and linking to comprise an all-encompassing network has considerable force and implications" (cited in McQuail, 2000, p. 87). The integration of text, numbers, images and sound, the different elements of the media which have developed separately over centuries, is a convergence occurring in cyberspace arising from the invention of the computer. The concept of convergence has a broader sense - convergence of different communication media such as mailing facilities (substitute for surface mail), radio, telephone and television, happening through the one

medium of the Internet Briggs and Burke (2005) refer to convergence in a different sense, identifying a convergence of cultures and societies “Different societies and cultures which started their historical journeys separately were now said to be traveling together on the same ‘information super-highway’ ” (p 216) (This concept is discussed later in more detail )

Religions also co-exist in this new medium Digital convergence is an important process happening on the Internet, with unexpected implications Howard Rheingold (2000) confirms this idea “In research-and-development laboratories, today, one popular buzz-phrase is ‘digital convergence’, which means that a lot more than virtual communities and libraries of text are going to live on the net in the near future” (p 68)

Packet switching, which is a basic element of Internet technology, is the first step of convergence It does not need a central control system because each packet and the entire network routers know how to get information around Packets contain digitised information, voice, sound, text, graphics, computer programs, etc and can be sent over the airwaves (Rheingold, 2000)

This is one of the first requirements of ‘going online’ Any individual, or organisation wishing to migrate to cyberspace, first of all, has to digitize the data Digitization is the process of translating the data into a form of discrete symbols The basic form of these discrete symbols consists of electromagnetic symbols in binary zeros and ones (Whittaker, 2002, p 193) Any information that can be digitized can be presented online by the respective interested parties If we examine the history of the Internet, we see that educational and research institutes were the first to go online “The first node was delivered to UCLA in 1969, and the network expanded to four nodes by the end of the year In 1970, Harvard and MIT

came online” (Rheingold, 2000, p. 68). This may be because education is mainly dealing with information. Other institutions closely related to daily life rather than just dealing with information, soon followed.

### *Convergence and Cornucopia*

Abundance ensues from convergence. “New technologies should make possible greater individual choice of what to see and hear – and of when to see and hear it” (Briggs and Burke, 2005, p. 217). The power of choice or opportunity to choose is a sign of abundance. Thus, convergence in the Internet makes more opportunities available and gives more power to individuals to choose the best of what is available.

The invention of the computer was a turning point, accelerating the convergence of the communication media. The computer, in its present form, is the result of the collaborative efforts of a considerable number of researchers over decades. Microcomputers integrated various methods of communication: “Hundreds of thousands of components could be carried on a microprocessor, and as their versatility became recognised a stimulus was given to digital over analog technology in all the media which were soon to become their main users” (Briggs and Burke, 2005, p. 224).

Like a magnet attracts particles of steel, the Internet brought together a number of spheres of human living to the information super highway. The title given ‘Mosaic’ given to the first ever browsing software, infers an assortment. It was described in the *New York Times* in December 1993 as ‘the first window into cyberspace’ (Briggs and Burke, 2005, p. 244). Convergence on the information super highway brought together a complex mixture of various areas of human existence. When human minds began to express themselves in this

new space, 'cyberspace' emerged as a new dimension of human existence, addressing the need of human beings for the information superhighway and the making use of it for individual human needs by becoming part of it. In the contemporary world cyberspace has become part and parcel of human living for many. It is an embedded media. Also it has created an opportunity for human beings to exist online creating a mutual 'embeddedness'. This makes cyberspace a human space, unlike other media in the past.

### *Virtual space/cyberspace*

The convergence of individual human beings is the ultimate aim of any communication medium. The Internet has made this convergence possible. Technically, the Internet is just a collection of personal computers connected *via* fiber optics. As a communication medium, it does not resemble a space conducive to human existence like other spaces of human interaction. Yet the Internet, when understood as 'virtual space', transforms the idea of 'space away from the three dimensional reality to the poly-dimensional interior world of the self' (Mirzoeff, 1999, p. 92).

Spiller (2002) traces the origin of the word 'cyberspace' to the Greek term *kubernetes* meaning steersman, as used originally by Plotinus in the third century BC. Cybernetics also traces its origin to the same Greek word, indicating how systems work and respond to outside stimuli. 'Cyberspace' was a word used for the first time by science fiction writer William Gibson. As Spiller observes, Gibson added a spatial metaphor to the concept of the coining of the word 'cybernetics' (Spiller, 2002, p. 7). He envisaged a 'cyberworld' created by the matrix of the interconnected sum of all the world's computer networks (Briggs and Burke, 2005, p. 252). 'Virtual space' was not the same as 'cyberspace'. The word 'virtual' means the 'simulation of a real thing' (Cowpertwait and Flynn, 2002, p. 438). All the simulated

experiences are collectively called virtual reality. There are writers who equate the virtual spaces of the experience of the Internet to medieval soul spaces with some spiritual connotation (Spiller, 2002, p 18)

In more recent times, the Internet is seen by many as a virtual or simulated world (Cowpertwait and Flynn, 2002). In this discussion 'cyberspace' and 'virtual space' are used interchangeably, even if they are viewed differently by various writers. They connote a world of infinite possibilities. For some, cyberspace is where you are when you are on the telephone, for others, it is a world of computer simulation, it is a computer-science concept of place, it is the agent of technological disappearance, it is forever dissolving, reconstituting, cyclically distilling and recombining. For some, it augments empirical scientific space with another space with different rules, for others it is a space that has inspired some to imbue it with a spiritual dimension – a technological gnosis, as put forward by Spiller (2002). Spiller's view is compelling where he states "to provide a definitive description of the phenomenon that is cyberspace is an impossible task" (Spiller, 2002, p 8). With its paradoxical entities already present and increasing at each moment, cyberspace cannot be given a definitive description, because it alters constantly. However, even if it is difficult to give an agreed description of cyberspace, its capacity to allow people to create a new and versatile social space in which they can 'meet and interact' with one another needs to be highlighted.

Also, people view this human interaction online in different ways. Some people find various landscapes in cyberspace in which different human needs can be met. Knowledge landscapes, homesteading on the electronic frontier, the Information Superhighway, the matrix of computer networks, the virtual public sphere, the Net and the Web are some of the terms that signify these different perspectives. 'Cyberspace', as a human space, functions at different

levels in its technical viability to make it an interactive space. In other words, human beings use it for their own purposes.

### ***Interactivity and Relationship in CMC***

In their book *Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)*, Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic (2004) quote Swedish Computer Scientist Jacob Palme who lists a number of reasons why people enjoy CMC genres such as Internet forums: (a) Status and self esteem, e.g., being able to communicate with experts, (b) Confidence, e.g., being able to keep up with your area of expertise, (c) Comradeship, e.g., being able to counter loneliness through interaction with people sharing your interests, (d) Inspiration, e.g., being able to exchange ideas, (e) Generosity, e.g., being able to get and give advice and support. These indicate that online relationships can be similar to those which are enjoyed in a face-to-face encounter and that the qualities of human interaction in cyberspace may be similar to those in the real world.

Similar arguments are made by McQuail (2000) in relation to mediation. It is a process with several elements which occurs through the mass media. He details three of these elements. The first part of the process is the relaying of second hand (or third party) versions of events. Secondly, he refers to the efforts of actors and institutions in society to contact people for their own purposes and also for the supposed good of the public. Thirdly, mediation accomplished through the media implies some form of relationship.

Thurlow et al (2004) report that, in a survey of 176 relatively long-term newsgroup users, researchers Parks and Flyod found that personal relationships were indeed common and sometimes even romantic. Friends communicated with each other on a weekly basis and, perhaps not surprisingly, the more frequently people interacted online the deeper the

relationship became Relationships in MOOs are discussed also by Thurlow et al (MOO an acronym for MUD - Multi User Dungeons, is a text-based online virtual reality system to which multiple users are connected at the same time (Castells, 2000, p 387 and Turbee, 1997) In a survey of 235 regular users of MOOs, Parks and Roberts found that nearly all respondents had formed ongoing personal relationships friends, close friends or romantic partners Levels of relational developments were typically high and marked by depth, interdependence and commitment (cited in Thurlow et al 2004)

In contrast, McQuail (2000) offers more cautious comments regarding cyber relationships, noting that they “are likely to be more distant, more impersonal and weaker than direct personal rites” He observes that a much larger share of communication and our contact with others and our environmental reality is mediated *via* information and communication technology these days, on an individual and private basis In exploring the typology of interaction in these new kinds of media, he quotes Thompson who notes that ‘it has become possible for more and more individuals to acquire information and symbolic content through mediated forms of interaction’ (cited in McQuail, 2000, p 65) Thompson distinguishes two kinds of interaction besides face-to-face contact First there is mediated interaction through some technical medium such as paper, electric wires etc , enabling information to be transmitted to individuals who are remote in space or time, or both In this interaction the participants do not share the same spatio-temporal references systems and have to consider the need to supply contextual information and make do with fewer symbolic cues than in face-to-face contact Mediation of quasi-interaction is another type of interaction which refers to relations established through the media of mass communication (cited in McQuail, 2000, p 65)

There is evidence to suggest that, a sense of deep commitment can emerge in CMC. Some people even say that they value their online relationships more than those offline. When people start to get close like this, it is only natural that they also start forming themselves into groups. 'The extent to which messages in sequence relate to each other and especially the extent to which later messages recount details of earlier messages' is the definition of interactivity on the Internet, provided by Thurlow et al (2004, p. 156). They say that the focus should be on the 'glue' that keeps message threads and their authors together. These authors term this a communication imperative. As human beings, we are born to communicate. This means that we invariably circumvent any practical or technological obstacles which might otherwise prevent us from having the kind of relational fulfilment we desire. Therefore it is not a matter of what technology affords or permits us to do but of how we appropriate the technology and make it do what we want it to do.

An observation by Gallagher (2003) is pertinent here. "The new culture is fascinated with interconnections and with personal interiority. It values diversity and convergence in thinking. This will be one of the many strands of postmodernity and of its possible greater openness to the religious dimension" (p. 36).

McQuail (2000) identifies the following dimensions that are relevant and help differentiate 'new' from 'old' media: the degree of interactivity, social presence, autonomy, playfulness and the degree of privacy. These can be considered as some essential elements to be taken into consideration by the Church in order to present itself effectively in the mosaic of the Internet.



### *Major Concerns around Cyber Communication*

This culture of virtual reality accelerates or can pose many threats. In other words, there are some ethical issues to be considered when exploring the multi-faceted culture of the Internet. The 'Digital Divide' is a term used to describe a form of discrimination dividing the rich from the poor, both within and among nations, on the basis of access or lack of access to the new information technology (Foley, 2002b, para. 10, John Paul II, 2002). Ward (2006) clarifies this issue in his writings on *The Post-Modern God*, "cyber space is yours only at a price. The cost begins with purchasing the computer and its software. . . . And not having access to this announces poverty, intellectual and material" (p. xvi).

The document issued during the reign of Pope John Paul II on *Ethics in the Internet* states that the Internet, along with the other media of social communications, is transmitting the value-laden message of Western secular culture to people and societies which, in many cases are ill-prepared to evaluate and cope with it (Foley, 2002b, para. 10). The same Pope raises an important issue regarding the ephemeral nature of the Internet. He argues that it offers extensive knowledge and no values, favouring a relativistic way of thinking and sometimes feeding the flight from personal responsibility and commitment developing a way of leading the contact made in the virtual world into the real world, and building on the first contact made through the Internet, are some other issues that arise regarding evangelisation.

The question of identity also raises serious issues about cyberspace where any user who has knowledge of the technology can get access to the Internet with a computer and modem (Whittaker, 2002, p. 166). Since the face and biological features of a person are not present on the Net, a user does not have to reveal his/her identity in order to be present on it. Turkle (1996) observes that the Internet is an element of computer culture that has contributed to

thinking about identity as multiplicity, people are able to build a 'self' on it by cycling through many selves. Also he raises another area of concern with this new technology relating to the use of this new medium for sex, pornography and obscenity. McQuail (2000) also expresses some reservations, noting that "the relationships established or mediated by the new communicating machines are often transient, shallow and without commitment, forms of social interaction that can be achieved to order, as it were" (McQuail, 2000, p. 129).

Having explained various aspects of the Internet, the next section considers online initiatives in the religious sphere.

### **3.3 Sacred Space and Cyberspace**

This section commences with an analysis of online initiatives which come under the broad umbrella of religion. Then the discussion becomes more focused, exploring Christian initiatives online. Next, regarding young people as 'cybersouls', the possibility of presenting Jesus Christ online is explored. Communication is presented as a core activity of the communal existence of the Church. Finally, an analysis of Catholic cyber culture is undertaken.

#### ***Online Initiatives in the Religious Sphere***

Many writers have contributed to the debate about religion online. For instance, in her book *Give Me that Online Religion*, Brasher (2004) argues that online religion is a very positive development and is crucial to the future of religion. She presents cyberspace as a vital cultural vehicle for the emergence of religious experience and expression in future society (p. 11). The ability to provide the spiritual sphere in a tangible way through the Internet creates opportunities for a new incarnation – new evangelisation.

For Cobb, cyberspace has an “intrinsic value that ties it irretrievably to the larger sacred fabric of the universe” (cited in Campbell, 2005, p. 55):

The divine expresses itself in the digital terrain through the vast global computer networks that are now beginning to display rudimentary self organising properties. If we can allow ourselves to understand the deeper, sacred mechanisms of cyberspace, we can begin to experience it as a medium for grace.

(cited in Campbell, 2005, p. 55)

This can be considered as a rather extreme view. Brasher also has reservations about Cobb’s theory, commenting that “it is a fascinating, if unprovable, theory” (Brasher, 2004, p. 11).

Margaret Wertheim puts forward the argument that the Internet allows people to reconnect with ideas of the spiritual, immaterial world that have been silenced by the dualistic cosmology of Western science. Her historical examination of public notions of space argues that cyberspace is a non-physical space, “outside the physical space that science has articulated”. Cyberspace provides a viable way to re-introduce the spiritual world into the postmodern context (cited in Campbell, 2005, p. 54).

In his collection of essays entitled *Cyber\_Reader*, Spiller (2002) considers that Wertheim is comparing the medieval spiritual soul-space with cyberspace. Campbell (2005) also depicts cyberspace as a sacred space, allowing individuals to consider the influence of the Internet at many levels, including a spiritual dimension. Here, according to Campbell, the spiritual appeal of cyberspace lies in the paradox that it is a repackaging of the old idea of Heaven, but in a secular, technologically sanctioned format. She comments: “The perfect realm awaits us, we are told, not behind the pearly gates but the electronic gateways labelled .com and .net

and .edu” (Campbell, 2005, p. 54). This represents the awaiting of millions of people who are estranged from the experience of the spiritual in the postmodern era. While the reasons of this estrangement are not detailed here, it can be noted that a distancing has occurred whereby the present young generation is unable to connect to the old ways of worship. This is a form of digital divide between the Church, with almost 2000 years of tradition, and the present generation, which surpasses the Church in its expertise of the digital. The Internet can address this by acting as a connecting space between traditional spiritual practices and the postmodern generation. A comment by Brasher is pertinent:

Examining the evolution of online religion in cyberspace gives some intimation of the direction human spirituality may take in the third millennium. Some people already navigate the virtual world with grace and ease; others are hard at work constructing their first virtual surfboard. Whether you choose to surf or run, the tidal wave of computer inspired spiritual change is coming. (Brasher, 2004, p. 43)

### *Technology as God project or Electric Gaia*

Campbell (2005) asserts that no unified overarching spiritual narrative exists in cyberspace. Rather, “like the world beyond the screen, the Internet exists as a marketplace of spiritual options” (Campbell, 2005, p. 57). This makes the Internet a hallmark of postmodern culture. The consideration of *Technology as God project* is one of the theories put forward by Campbell (2005). Technopaganism or neo-paganism is a religious practice that seeks to consciously ritualise cyberspace. The purpose of technopaganism is to bring magical space and cyberspace together. This allows individuals to practice ancient pagan rituals online. It illustrates how individuals can use technology not just as a tool or space for worship, but to adapt beliefs so that engaging with the technology becomes an act of worship. Wertheim

offer another view, opining that cyberspace invokes a *collective immaterial arena* here on earth (cited in Spiller, 2002, p 302)

A similar 'quasi-mystical' concept of the Internet lies in comparing the online presence to eternal time Brasher's (2004, p 52) view is in keeping with this approach "It is always present Whatever exists within it never decays Whatever is expressed in cyberspace, as long as it remains in cyberspace, is perpetually expressed" The quasi-mystical appeal is that cyberspace exudes a taste of eternity to those who interact with it

This corresponds to the idea of post-modern life put forward by Ward (2001) in the *The Post Modern God* He argues that surfing the net is the ultimate post-modern experience

Time and space collapse into omnipresence and multi-locality The electronic tide maintains you on the crest of impending satisfaction fast-forwarding to the endless pleasures yet to be located and book marked Time disappears, boredom is deflated (Ward, 2001, p xv)

Pope John Paul II (2002) raises some concerns about this radical difference in the experience of reality and the human response to it Regarding the experience of the concept of online time, Pope John Paul II refers to the post-modern life of the new generation as follows

The Internet radically redefines a person's psychological relationship to time and space Attention is riveted on what is tangible, useful, instantly available, the stimulus for deeper thought and reflection may be lacking Yet human beings have a vital need for time and inner quiet to ponder and examine life and its mysteries (para 4)

The quest for a virtual experience may be interpreted as a sign of the quest for the spiritual. However, more research is required in order to comprehend the impact of the experience of online eternity. This is outside the scope of the present study.

In Campbell's (2005) view, another concept of *Electric Gaia* is revealed when she refers to the work of Jesuit theologian and anthropologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who is referred to as the patron saint of Cyberspace. In his theological writings, de Chardin (1881-1955) envisioned an evolutionary space called the noosphere "the earth's thinking envelope" (cited in Campbell, 2005, p. 31).

### ***The Noosphere and the Internet***

"The purpose of evangelisation is the interior conversion of the personal and collective consciousness of people, the activities in which they engage and the lives and the *milieu* which are theirs" (Paul VI, 1975b, para. 18). Regarding young people as 'cybersouls', this section explores the possibility of presenting Jesus Christ online. To begin, it takes the concept of the *noosphere*, developed by Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), and applies it to the Internet. Drawing on de Chardin's work, the Internet is considered as a space which connects human consciousness in a way that leads to a collective reflection.

Defined as the sphere of the mind, de Chardin envisioned the noosphere as a global consciousness that can bring harmony to humankind. Cobb (1998) draws on de Chardin's idea in attempting to create a 'theology of cyberspace'. Barlow (1997) also equates the present Internet with the *noosphere* (cited in Campbell, 2005, p. 58). This entails looking at the Internet as a means of bringing humans together to form a unified community.

De Chardin (1978) envisioned three stages of development in the universe the biosphere, the *noosphere* and the Christosphere or Theosphere. The biosphere is the earth's living envelope whereas the *noosphere* is its thinking envelope. De Chardin's description of the *noosphere* suggests a prototype of the present Internet.

There was something more around this sentient protoplasmic layer [around the biosphere or physical world], an ultimate envelope was beginning to become apparent to me, taking on its own individuality and gradually detaching itself like a luminous aura. This envelope was not only conscious but thinking in an ever more dazzling and consistent form, the essence or rather the very soul of the Earth (cited in Campbell 2005, p. 32)

As it is very pertinent to this study, a deeper understanding of this concept is considered important.

#### *De Chardin's Vision: A Prototype of Evangelisation Online*

In de Chardin's vision, *noosphere* emerged after the biosphere through 'increasing technical efficiency' (Aykara, 1997, p. 33) to totalise mankind. It comprises the existence of Earth's thinking envelope and its contours, transformation through reflection and psycho-social convergence, accelerating the shift towards ultra-human states called planetisation (De Chardin, 1978, p. 29 - 32)

De Chardin (1978) is viewed as a process theologian. In line with the views of the scholars mentioned above regarding his vision of the *noosphere* and its similarity to the global entity of the Internet, the convergence of consciousness is a possible outcome of the Internet. Castells opines that "computers, communication systems, and genetic decoding and

programming are all amplifiers and extensions of the human mind” (Castells, 2000, p 31)

De Chardin also contemplated a human phenomenon of co-reflection and a co-conscientising to underpin the apparent commonplace superficiality of the Earth’s technico-social disposition. In his opinion, this co-reflection, with decisive importance for both our ‘understanding and our will’, is moving in the direction of a complexity-consciousness of planetary dimensions (De Chardin, 1978, p 86). Understanding and decision, reflecting upon online activities, the power to know, the power to choose and the power to decide, have been given to an individual who is browsing. It is suggested that, these activities of the mind seem more important in online interaction.

Mooney’s (1964) reflection on de Chardin’s vision is in line with the working of online modules such as ‘threading’ and associated individual reflections posted on a topic which make a collective reflection possible.

What Teilhard had in mind, therefore, when he speaks of the ‘planetary maturation of mankind’, is a certain collective act of reflection, something which is quite credible if we once concede his analysis of evolution and admit his law of complexity-consciousness (Mooney, 1964, p 47).

This is the point of “the progress in the complexification of matter being matched by a corresponding progress in consciousness” (Gray, 1969, p 90). But De Chardin (1978) finds a danger in this process: “left to itself, our consciousness (however intense it may be in each one of us) of sharing in a planetary Flux of co-reflection is capable of building up the sort of religion of mere ‘evolutionary humanism’ ” (p 91). There is a deepening of interiority (which may be also called growth of consciousness), according to the growth in complexity of



matter. The energy coming out of the developed interiority is not necessarily only good as it can also cause “a growth in the possibilities of evil” (Gray, 1969, p. 92)

The world can only avoid this danger if humanity can make up its mind about the human phenomenon of co-reflection in order to find its full expression and its true place in the Christian phenomenon. It is a movement from the physical grounding of knowledge to a mystical plain. De Chardin (1978) states that “the time has come for Christianity to develop a precise consciousness of all the hopes stimulated by the dogma of the Universality of Christ when it is enlarged into this new scale” (p. 93). Being aware of the hardships, he comments “how can we conceive that Christ ‘is immensified’ to meet the demands of our new Space-Time, without losing his personality” (p. 93). Castells (2000) states that the power of traditional senders like religion, morality, authority, traditional values and political ideology was transmitted through historically encoded social habits. His concern is valid for the Church in the context of evangelisation. “Not that they will disappear, but they are weakened unless their power becomes multiplied by the electronic materialisation of spiritually transmitted habits. Superior spiritual powers still conquer souls but lose their superhuman status” (Castells, 2000, p. 406).

Interpreting his concern in the context of evangelisation, it becomes clear that participation in communication on the Internet can strengthen the Church’s evangelisation process. If the Internet connects the minds of young people, building online networks may be an opportunity for the Church to evangelise young people in a profound way. This possibility is discussed in chapter 4 in the light of de Chardin’s vision. Now, the debate moves on to explore Christian initiatives Online.

### *Some Christian Initiatives Online*

“Consider, for instance, satellite telecasts of religious ceremonies which often reach a global audience, or the positive capacities of the Internet to carry religious information and teaching beyond all barriers and frontiers” (John Paul II, 2001c, para 3)

The use of the Internet by Christians began in the 1980s (Hutchins, 2007, p 243) The Church Computer User Network (CCUN), an ecumenical and national organisation started in the US by the United Methodist Church, is an early example of Christian initiatives online (Campbell, 2005, p 64) Hutchins (2007) refers to evangelicals as using Bulletin Board Systems around the mid 1980s Campbell (2005) identifies three dominant expressions of cyber participation by Christians (1) cyberchurches, (2) e-vangelism and (3) Online Christian communities Each of these is now considered

### *Cyber churches*

Campbell (2005) adopts Dixon’s approach in defining two forms of cyber churches (a) As the body of all Christians who interact, using global computer networks and (b) as an electronically linked group of believers, aiming to reproduce in cyberspace aspects of conventional church life Hutchins (2007) did some interesting research in a case study of three cyber churches where he tried to comprehend the intensity of religious experience taking place in them In this study he contrasts two kinds of interactions One is textual interaction and the other is graphical “The first virtual worlds were text-based, in that their environments and the events occurring within them were described using words rather than images” (Bartle, 2003, p 1) Hutchins (2007) talks about the ‘immersion’ of a player in these virtual worlds Distinguishing between the two, he says that text is better for intimate, intense, imaginative worlds where thought is more important than action He identifies

graphics as being good for gregarious, large-scale, beautiful virtual worlds where action is more important. He is trying to challenge an argument in the Vatican document 'The Church and Internet' which suggests that virtual reality is no substitute for shared worship in a human community. Although interesting, his findings do not seem to pose a challenge to the stance of the Catholic Church, from a theological or communications point of view.

Campbell (2005) gives the example of the cyber church founded by Charles Henderson. It is a consortium of ecumenical churches and individuals who meet online every Sunday evening for conversations, using Internet Relay Chat (IRC). The WebChurch and Virtual Church of the Blind Chihuahua are other examples given by Campbell (2005) in her book *Exploring Religious Community Online*. She notes that, while dozens of cyber churches exist and continue to emerge online, in various forms, more are in the broadcast form rather than being interactive.

### *E-vangelism*

Careaga (2002) coined the term *e-vangelism* which means *sharing the Gospel in cyberspace*. It involves using the Internet as a tool for missionary work to reach out to those who are estranged from the Church. According to Campbell, this focuses on presenting a purposeful Christian presence in cyberspace through a variety of means such as websites, chat rooms and e-mail lists. The Gospel Communication Network, launched in 1995, is presented as one of the first organizations to see the Internet as a potential "mission field". Other examples are Who is Jesus (<http://www.ccc1.org/w1j/>?), Gospelcom's Online Evangelism web guide ([www.gospelcom.net/guide](http://www.gospelcom.net/guide)) and Brigada's Online Web Evangelism Guide ([www.brigada.org/today/articles/web-evangelism.html](http://www.brigada.org/today/articles/web-evangelism.html)). Another site is [e-vangelism.com](http://www.e-vangelism.com) by Careaga (Campbell, 2005, p. 66).

### *Online Christian Communities*

The improvement in participation for an individual is a unique innovation on the Internet. My space, bebo, orkut and other similar social web sites have given more power to the individual in the sense that anyone who is familiar with the technology can participate in online social interaction, transcending real life impediments. Horsfield and Teusner (2007) uphold this view. "In this decade we have watched the Internet evolve, moving from Oldweb to Web 2.0, facilitating interaction between users and resulting in the exponential growth of Internet sites around the world" (p. 287).

The phrase Web 2.0 signifies a new set of Internet applications such as social networking sites, wikis, filesharing networks, folksonomies and syndication sites. These social interactions are on the increase. Depending on how the Church responds to these new cultural spheres, it may be able to reach out to young people in the future. This may be the context in which the Vatican showed an interest in establishing an interactive site in 2006. "People will be able to find each other and work together online, and then go back and use what they have learned or done in their own communities" (Zenit, 2006). Campbell (2005) identifies the gathering of the "digital body of Christ" in online Christian Communities as a third significant form of online Christianity. This facilitates interactions with believers who are separated by geography but share some sort of religious connection. Also she cites ReaperNet (<http://chat.reapernet.com/>) as one example of online Christian Communities facilitating two way interaction through various computer technologies such as chat room and e-mail. Websites like xt3.com can be considered as initiatives by the Catholic Church initiating online interactions for young people.

## *Online Youth*

Careaga (2002) suggests using the Internet as a tool for youth ministry. The findings of a study by the Barna Research Group (US) in 1998 regarding a future online Church for young people are presented by Campbell (2005). The group proclaimed that the cyber church was about to come. It was based on a national survey of teenagers where one out of six said they expected to use the Internet as a substitute for current church-based religious experience. Their activities, as presented by Campbell (2005), include interaction with others in chat rooms or e-mail exchanges about religious beliefs. Much earlier McLuhan (1967) observed that, "The young today reject goals. They want roles. Young people are looking for a formula for putting on the universe – participation mystique" (McLuhan, and Fiore, 1967, p 100, p 114). Applying this to online activity, it suggests that young people may require a participative experience in cyberspace, whether it be broadly religious, Christian or Catholic. The role of the Church may be to prepare interactive and participative cyber communities which are appropriate for the young. This can help narrow the distance between the realm of the Divine and the sphere of young people. The Internet has become a medium where a plethora of human experiences and needs can be met, using its ever increasing number of websites. Considering young people as Cybersouls, based on what is available in cyberspace, how can the evangelisation of the young be achieved online? What are the facilities on the Internet that could enable the Church to initiate a relationship with young people? What are the factors that could help start a spiritual dialogue with young people? If spaces of spiritual dialogue can be created, how can they be sustained? These are some of the issues to be explored in this research. Some significant areas related to the building up of an online space for evangelisation of young people are discussed below.

### *Catholic Cyber Culture*

In one way, Church communication can be viewed as mass communication because, on a day-to-day basis, the Church is dealing with a very large number of people. The same message of the Good News is being imparted to many people on a regular basis. However it is not quite like other mass communication media. It takes place in small communities, at different locations in the world, at different times of the day or night. Yet, in the communication of evangelisation, the same message is communicated all over the world, i.e., the message of the Good News. Therefore, before delving further into the possibilities of sharing the Good News Online, the relationship between communication and the Church needs to be clarified.

### *Communication and 'Communio' in the Catholic Church*

According to Henrici (1994), "the Church is not simply an organisation constituted by communication – as are all organisations. The Church is constituted in order to communicate" (p. 45). It was established in the previous chapter that communication is necessary for the fundamental evangelical mission of the Church – spreading the Good News. This chapter shows that communication itself is fundamental to the Church and can be established from the point of view of the ecclesiology of *communio*.

Koinonia/communion, founded on the Sacred Scripture, has been held in great honor in the early Church and in the Oriental Churches to this day. Thus, much was done by the Second Vatican Council so that the Church as communion might be more clearly understood and concretely incorporated into life. (Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, 1985, para II-B-b-I)

Founded on the scripture (1 Cor 10 16-17) and regarded as central to the life of the Church from early times (Vatican II, 1964a, para 4)<sup>3</sup>, Vatican II also upheld the theme *communio*. Thus, the Church has been seen as “a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Vatican II, 1964a, para 4). Here the term *communio* refers back to the communion of a triune God, the communion of three persons in the trinity. The ontology of this relational communion is expressed in the Catholic Encyclopedia in the following way: “For God, substantial being is being related” (Kress and Malanowski, 2003, p 28). Consequently, God’s very being is the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This means that God’s very substance is a communicated being. Here communication becomes fundamental to the Trinitarian communion. Human beings are invited to be in communion with this inescapable ‘being with’. This *communio* is the model as well as the goal of human life. The relationship between communication and communion becomes explicit here. This was fundamental to the philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas because he used the word *communicatio* (communication) for *communio* (communion) and *communitas* (community) (Granfield, 1994, p 4). Thus it is evident that communication is fundamental to community as well as communion.

The following description of this *communio* shows that it is a dynamic union. Theologians use the term *perichoresis* to describe this *communio*. This means that, “God is so full of being that his oneness is manyness, a manyness that in no way divides or separates, negates or isolates his oneness” (Kress and Malanowski, 2003, p 28). According to the synod of Bishops in 1985, basically it is a communion with God through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. The Word of God and the sacraments are the means of this communion. Baptism is its

---

<sup>3</sup> The main references of *Lumen Gentium* are from Sacred Scripture but it gives supplementary notes referring to the early Fathers as follows: S. Cyprianus, *De Orat Dom* 23 PL 4, 5S3, Hartel, III A, p 28S. S. Augustinus, *Serm* 71, 20, 33 PL 38, 463 s. S. Io. Damascenus, *Adv Iconocl* 12 PG 96, 1358 D. supplementary notes \*4, *Lumen Gentium* art 4 also preliminary notes of explanations art 2.

door and the foundation. The Eucharist is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life (Vatican II, 1964a, para 11). The communion of the Eucharistic Body of Christ builds up the intimate communion of all the faithful in the Body of Christ which is the Church (1 Cor 10 16) (Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, 1985, para II-B-b-I)

**Concrete Instances of 'Communio'** The communication of God's very relational being is reflected in the various instances of *communio* in the world and the Church. Kienzler (1994) identifies five instances of this communion in relation to the Church

- (a) *Communio* - Community with God. In the light of the documents of Vatican II (1964a para 4, 1964a, para 2) the instituting of the Church is like an icon reflecting the Trinitarian fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (1964a, para 2)<sup>4</sup>
- (b) *Communio* - Eucharistic Community. The Trinitarian communion is made visible in the Eucharistic communion (Vatican II, 1964a, para 7)<sup>5</sup>
- (c) *Communio* - The Unity of the Church. Communion originated from the trinity, was made concrete in the Eucharistic communion and is now imbibed and reflected in the structure and order of the Church through ecclesial communication
- (d) *Communio* - Communion of the Faithful (*Fidelium*). The communication which occurs within the Church manifests a communion between individual members as an assembly of individually communicating persons<sup>6</sup> (Vatican II, 1964a, chapter 1 and chapter 2, para 7)

---

<sup>4</sup> "What has revealed the love of God among us is that the Father has sent into the world His only-begotten Son, so that, being made man, He might by His redemption give new life to the entire human race and unify it" *Unitatis Redintegratio* (Vatican II, 1964b para 2)

<sup>5</sup> "Really partaking of the body of the Lord in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with Him and with one another. "Because the bread is one, we though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread" In this way all of us are made members of His Body, "but severally members one of another" " *Lumen Gentium* (Vatican II, 1964a, para 7)

<sup>6</sup> "As all the members of the human body, though they are many, form one body, so also are the faithful in Christ. Also, in the building up of Christ's Body various members and functions have their part to play. There is only one Spirit who, according to His own richness and the needs of the ministries, gives His different gifts for the welfare of the Church" *Lumen Gentium* (Vatican II, 1964a, para 7)



(e) *Communio* - Sacrament for the World This *communio* of the Church is intended to be the sign of salvation for the world. The commitment to justice, peace and freedom for all human beings and nations and to a civilization based on love, is a fundamental perspective of the Church today (Kienzler, 1994, p. 85-88)

According to *Lumen Gentium* (Vatican II, 1964a), *communio* is used to designate the entire 'mystical body of Jesus Christ' those in glory who are purified and those still on pilgrimage (para. 50). *Communio* includes all processes and elements that make communion possible. It is a mutual sharing of the self. It is a dynamic, mutual and creative mediation/communication of the self. Community is the result of this *communio*. The Church is at the receiving end of the gift of God himself, at the same time, the Church is modeled on the Trinitarian community in its communication and communion. Having established the importance of communication in the *communio* and *communitas* (communion and community), next, the nature of communication in the Church is considered.

**Communication and 'Communio'** Plude (1994) attempts to adapt the Church's communication to the cyber age in her article 'Interactive Communication in the Church'. She uses the term 'interactive technologies' to include 'the impact of communication satellites, telephony, computer technologies and the integration of communications and computers'. Pottmeyer's understanding of three dimensions of Church communication are described by her as follows:

- (1) Communication within the Church (*communio fidelium, communion ecclesiarum*),
- (2) Extra-ecclesial communication (the Church as the sacrament of the Kingdom within the unity of mankind), and
- (3) The self-communication of God (history of salvation) (Plude, 1994, p. 187-190)

She establishes that all Church communication converges within the framework of divine self-communication. Thus the Church's role is one of a sign or witness. Similarly, Sierra-Gutiérrez reflects upon communication as self-mediation:

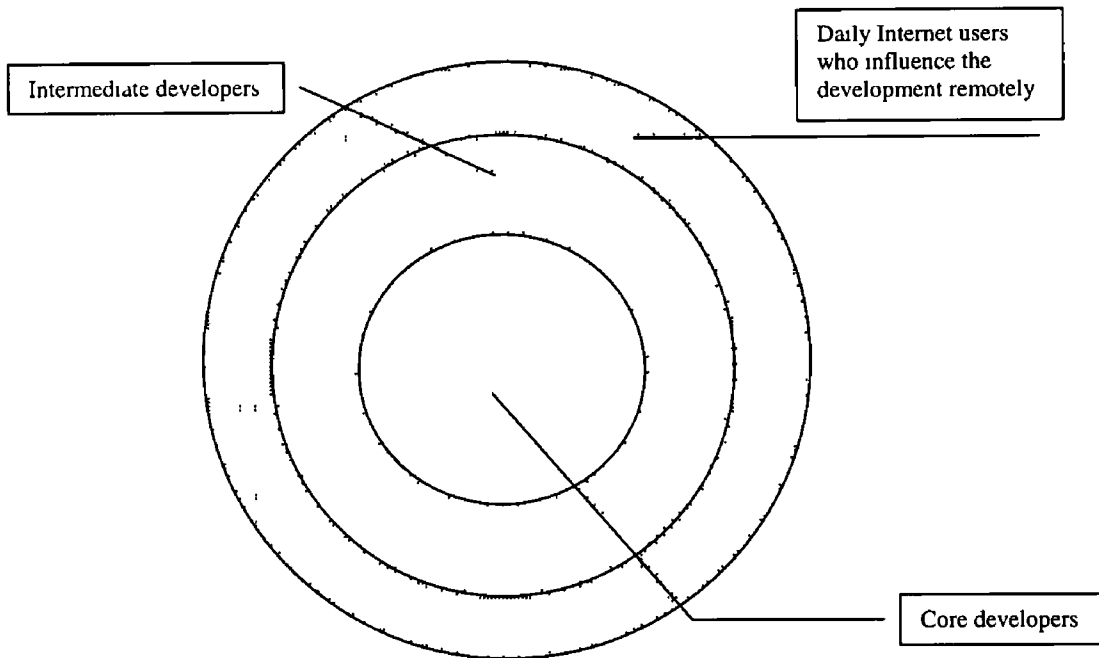
Communication, conceived as a mutual self-mediation of human beings, their meanings, and values becomes dynamic and transformative. It is a space where a co-production, a co-reference, a co-creation of new shared meanings, a co-transformation of wholes constituted by common meanings and values is performed (Sierra-Gutiérrez, 1993, p. 273)

It has been established that communication is fundamental to the Church in view of the ecclesiology of *communio*. As a new instrument of social communication, the Internet can be instrumental for the Church in its pilgrimage towards reaching the Trinitarian *communio*. As communication happening within *communio* is understood as self-mediation, a personalised form of online interaction would be required to initiate the journey of the Church towards this goal. These questions are addressed in the next chapter. Some areas of the participation of the Church on the Internet are discussed below.

#### *Spheres of Interaction between the Church and the Internet*

Three categories of people are connected to the Internet, using it as a medium of communication like any other medium. As shown in Fig 3.3, these are core developers, intermediate developers and daily users with remote influence on development.

**Fig 3 3 Three Categories of Internet Users**



Some questions arise at this juncture (1) What level of intimacy exists between the Church and the Internet? (2) Where do the Church and its baptised members stand in the above circles? (3) Has the Church got any power to influence the core development of the Internet? The participation of the Church in the above three levels of Internet use can provide ways of improving internal communication in the Church. In addition, this can open up opportunities of influencing the medium. In turn, eventually this can lead to initiating new avenues of evangelisation.

In the previous chapter on evangelisation, it was established that the Internet can be used by the Church for two main purposes (1) improving internal communication in the Church, and (2) evangelisation. The Internet, with its apparent richness arising from its characteristics of speed of communication, geographical reach, data storage and retrieval and the ability to combine multimedia, seems to be suitable as a means of effective communication. This is based on viewing the Internet as a medium of communication.

In the three categories in Fig 3 7, the outer group of people who migrate to the Internet prove that it is not just similar to any other traditional medium. They turn the Internet into a space for *social* interaction, making themselves present online by creating a personal page. By uploading their personal profile, photos and video clips, they make it a dynamic space. This seems to be a skill which many young people have acquired. They create a space for dynamic interaction between themselves. This includes people using web 2 0, referred to earlier in the previous section. It is a significant and unique aspect of cyberspace. The intermediate developers made it possible for the influx of daily internet users to logon. By participating on the Internet as either intermediate developers or core developers the Church will be enabled to forge a more effective and systematic engagement in its interaction with young people.

In this context of social networking, Fernback (1997) draws on the work of Urry who suggests that cyberspace is not matter but rather a set of culturally bound relations as well as an empirical construct. This is a humanistic approach to cyberspace. The Catholic theology of evangelisation is also humanistic, according to the teachings of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II, as discussed in the previous chapter. Some of thinking about cyberspace and catholic evangelisation share the same common ground – humanism. In similar vein, some potential areas where the Catholic Church can take initiatives are considered below.

### ***A Catholic Cyber Prospect***

In earlier times before the advent of the Internet, the Church experienced ‘interconnectedness’ in different parts of the world. The same message was being shared and the same memory was being relived in the Eucharist and the sacraments. The vehicles of the Good News were the existing forms of communication such as orality, literacy and ritual/visual presentation. Handing on the tradition was achieved both orally and in writing.

In addition, at the core of evangelisation, the sacraments were letting people participate and, by involvement in the rituals or visual presentation, the message was made personal and experiential (Here aspects of evangelisation are being considered from the perspective of communication. The purpose of the study is not to analyse the aspect of grace and the divine nature of the sacraments.) The Good News was the common denominator in all churches in different parts of the world. This interconnected nature of the Church was upheld by the hierarchical structure as well as by the different apostolic traditions.

This does not mean that new technology, leading to McLuhan's 'global village', has nothing to offer the Church. On the contrary, the new electronic media can impact on it in many ways. By availing of new developments in technology, the Church, similar to any other institution, can improve its communication of information both internally and externally. However, if the Church fails to take fuller advantage of the possibilities open to it through great use of information technology, it is losing out on a powerful medium. Three of its advantages are described below.

(1) The Internet, being a global storage and retrieval system, can help retrieve the cultural memory of the world. If the Church, with its global presence, participates, the cultural diversity of the globe may be recalled. As Fernback (1997) observes, 'cyberspace is a repository for collective cultural memory' (p. 37). In the context of the European Union, the Internet can be used for retrieval and recollection of the spiritual memory of Europe.

Not only in Europe but all over the world, a recollection of the Christian culture can be instructive in informing the younger generation of the spiritual patrimony of respective places. It is more applicable to Europe, where Catholic culture has been a major influence in

the past The Roman martyrology gives the names of saints and spiritual centres of the World They were the cultural centres of the world at a particular time The monastic Christian culture paved the way for modern culture in many locations Bosch (1991) captures one such memory relating to the importance of monks

The monks were poor and they worked incredibly hard, they ploughed, hedged, drained morasses, cleared away forests, did carpentry, thatched, and built roads and bridges Even secular historians acknowledge that the agricultural restoration of the largest part of Europe has to be attributed to them They turned the tide of barbarism in Western Europe and brought back into cultivation the lands which had been deserted and depopulated in the age of the invasions

(Bosch, 1991, p 231-232)

While, the memory of this patrimony is fading, the Internet, it seems, can retrieve it This requires a collective approach In the context of World Youth Day, when young people move from their home country, there are two ways of recollecting the Christian Cultural memory One is by identifying the spiritual memory of the place where the particular World Youth Day is located A second way is to identify the Christian history of the place from which they have come For example, in the context of Spain where WYD 2011 took place, there are many saints there in the Roman martyrology As there are a lot of immigrants from various parts of Europe in Spain, a recollection of the importance of Christian culture in those locations from which they migrated to Spain could be insightful

(11) “The Internet is another in a line of modern technologies that undermine the traditional notions of civil society that require unity and shun multiplicity, while giving the impression that they in fact re-create such a society” (Jones, 1997, p 25) The Internet seems to be a

medium which can be used like a web, holding links between the multiplicity of traditions, spiritualities, cultures, languages, liturgical practices and geographical distances that compose and define the Catholic Church. It is built in such a way that if a node is destroyed at one end of the whole system, the Internet, as such, cannot be destroyed. It is a matrix of computers, linked around the globe, that can work by sending data from other nodes and through alternative routes, if some nodes and routes are destroyed. Similarly, a bird's-eye-view of the Church over time and space suggests that the Church itself can be viewed as a matrix of different spiritualities, liturgical traditions, founded on various cultures and a collection of individual churches. Theological schools try incessantly to extract meaning from the historical and cultural differences in the Church over time. Its survival system worked through its diversity. Alternatively, when the Church faced serious set-backs, its diversity could be viewed as a survival system developed over time. Thus decentralisation of its spiritual capacities or spiritual good is not new for the Church. The Internet, with a similar surviving mechanism, can facilitate the Church in spreading its message in the future.

(iii) Thirdly, the participation of the Church in cyberspace can make it a space free of constraints. The Internet is a place advocating decentralisation of authority. This trend of decentralisation sometimes gives the impression that the Internet is a space where there is no control at all because the control system is not as visible as in a single control unit. Are there moral laws and ethical guidelines that define the Internet, making it a space of interaction not for an archaic but for a civilised society? Advocates of free speech and libertarians try to proclaim the Internet as a free space. The possibility of anonymity for people interacting online has made it easy for others to prey on those who are vulnerable through online interaction. As in the past, when the law of retaliation (*lex talionis*) ruled in Old Testament times, legislation found new frontiers on the Internet. Since the Internet provides such a huge

space for human interaction, the participation of the Church in its cultural spheres can help the Internet change its image among 'lay' people who fear its negative aspects. Christian humanism is founded on human development and the ultimate freedom of the human spirit. Cyberspace is a human space. At the same time, if cyberspace can be free to the level of enjoying the ultimate freedom of ancient societies, there is a possibility that barbarism can rule in its secret shades. "Based on this perception of cyberspace as a vast treasure-trove of materials ready for appropriation, we often make use of whatever we find without seeking the person who has extended him-or herself [sic] towards us" (Mahfood, 2008)

This section on Catholic Cyber Culture has explored the fundamental necessity of communication as a constitutive reality of it being *communio*. Spheres of interaction between the Church and the Internet were then analysed before finally discussing some future possibilities online.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Initially, a general theory of communication was presented, followed by a review of the changes in models of communication with the introduction of the Internet. Then the discussion moved to the technology of the Internet. In unweaving the web from its origin and development, the progression of the Internet from an information sharing medium to a social space was outlined. This led to a review of the characteristics of the medium. Major changes in communication, making the Internet a medium of individual interaction, were then considered before analysing some concerns about cyber communication.

The next section dealt mainly with how cyberspace has influenced the realm of religion. Initially, online initiatives in the broad sphere of religion were considered. Regarding young



people as 'cybersouls', the possibility of presenting Jesus Christ online was explored. Then the Christian view of the Internet was examined. Finally, the Catholic concept of communication was analysed before considering some possible initiatives online. As youth evangelisation online is the focus of this explanatory study, the next chapter presents an in-depth analysis of youth

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EMPOWERING YOUTH IN CYBERSPACE**

The sharing of the Good News with young people through the Internet is the focus of this research. The three main areas for consideration in the study are evangelisation in the Catholic Church, the Internet as a means of evangelisation and the involvement of young people in the process of evangelisation. Following the introductory chapter, the concept of evangelisation within the Catholic tradition was considered in chapter 2 while chapter 3 identified the possible features of the Internet that could be used for evangelisation. Young people are the focus of this chapter.

With a view to exploring the possibilities of empowering young people, the first section of this chapter examines the concept of youth. Next, some of the important characteristics of young people in this information age are identified. Following this, issues regarding young people as natives of post-modern era are reviewed. Then, various possibilities of cyber relationships between young people are discussed. Finally, the theoretical foundation of a project of online faith development for young people is considered.

#### **4.1 The Concept of Youth**

What does the word 'youth' signify? Is 'youth' a mere biological period in the process of human development? According to Boran (1999), an expert in youth ministry, "Youth starts with puberty and finishes more or less when the body finishes growing" (p. 106). Other scholars in the area of youth ministry categorise youth within a particular age group. "I define youth ministry as the Church's ministry to, with, by and for young people from ages fourteen

to twenty-five” (Zanzig, 1987, p 41) However, Fulton et al, (2000) in a research context, consider that youth can range well beyond the age 24 and point out the anomaly in such categorisation In identifying the exact population of young adults for youth ministry, Warren (1982) observes that it is difficult to specify this population by age He considers that a particular age group as well as need groups are to be identified in order to achieve an effective youth ministry

Those concerned about ministry to young adults will have to continue specifying the particular population they are concerned with young marrieds under thirty, young singles under thirty, divorced persons of a particular age range, young adult homosexuals, Vietnam veterans, or the unemployed My own use of “young adults” will refer to persons between twenty and thirty-five

(Warren, 1982, p 113)

Some concerns arise at this juncture The first relates to those factors that constitute the category of people called ‘youth’ The next concern is about the terms or phrases that are used by the above scholars in referring to youth

The latter will be addressed first All these scholars seem to have used the terms youth, young people and young adults when referring to this physiological period in human life ranging from adolescence to adulthood Also these terms have been used interchangeably without much distinction between them even if, literally, they have different meanings According to the Oxford Dictionary (1987), the first meaning of the word youth is given as ‘the state of being young’ It is also used as a term to signify a young person (second meaning) As a third meaning, ‘youth’ is used as a collective term meaning ‘young men’ and ‘women’ The word ‘young’ is an adjective and has the first meaning (when contrasted with ‘old’) as not far

advanced in life, growth, development etc. Thus the word 'youth' seems to mean both a stage of life as well as a person or people of that age. In this study, the term 'young people' and 'youth' are used interchangeably. Further information on the term 'youth' and 'young people' in the next section sheds more light on the concept of being young. The factors which constitute the category of people referred to as 'youth' are detailed in later sections.

### ***The Phenomenon of Youth***

In an article entitled "Archetypal Patterns of Youth", Eisenstadt (1963) provides some insights on 'youth'. He sees 'youth' as a biologic phenomenon defined in cultural terms. Even if every human being passes through various ages and at each age he/she performs different tasks, Eisenstadt (1963) argues that, in most societies, the period of transition from childhood to full adult status or full membership in society is given a special emphasis. According to Boran (1999) youth is a phase in human life embracing adolescence and post-adolescence in which many important decisions are taken. "What it means to be young is also shaped by culture" (Boran 1999, p. 106). He points out the social, psychological and cultural implications of this period. A holistic vision of 'youth', which contains all the crucial elements of any definition of age, is found in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1977). It combines the biological, social and cultural changes happening in the stages of life of a human being. "youth thus begins with the onset of puberty and, after a number of years in which further experience and training are received, finally fits the individual for full citizenship in his own particular society and culture" (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1977, p. 1090).

Youth cannot be considered merely in biological or psychological terms. There are external factors or agents that help to draw out, shape or develop youth as we understand it today.

Eisenstadt (1963) sheds light on this aspect of the development of youth “‘Youth’ is the stage at which the individual’s personality acquires the basic psychological mechanism of self-regulation and self-control, when his/her self-identity becomes crystallized” (Eisenstadt, 1963, p 32) Viewed in this way, youth essentially carries the implications of a transitional and developmental process of attaining the maturity of adulthood Those agents that shape youth also become important Can the Church act as a catalyst in this development of youth? If the Church wants to adopt this role, an understanding of those social and cultural factors that influence young people in the contemporary world needs to be developed

### *Youth Labels*

Some of the labels used to refer to young people over the past few decades provide an insight into their nature Baby boomers, Generation X and Net Generation (NetGen) (Generation Y) are some categorisations given in relation to young people (Hill, 2001) Beaudoin (1998) claims that the Generation X (those born after the late 1960s) tries to find meaning through immersion in popular culture, whether it be movies or music Image is the foundation of their experience In contrast, a conversation quoted by Rabey (2001) is tinged with a slightly negative view

What is TNL (Tuesday Nite Live)? asked the ministry’s newsletter It’s a Generation X thing What is Generation X? It’s a generation of young adults who have been stereo typed as slackers, but who really are the best hope for the future (Rabey, 2001, p 3)

While Rabey (2001) indicates a labelling of young people tinged with negativity, Fulton et al (2000) deem that both media and academia consider this generation as postmodern

Both media and academia often charge that the West has entered a postmodern, post-Christian or post religious society and that this change has increased the rate of decline of religious belief and belonging, and damaged personal and social morality, with particular effects on the young adult generation (sometimes referred to in the literature as *Generation X*) (Fulton et al, 2000, p 2)

This view also suggests a negative picture of youth in the postmodern setting Careaga (2001) identified three generations which constitute the majority of Net users today baby boomers (born between 1945-late 1960), Generation X (born between 1960-1980) and the emerging Net Generation, as he calls them There are some scholars who name those born after 1980 as *Generation Y*, or millennials (Malphurs and Malphurs, 2003) Burke-Sullivan (2008) considers that young people of *Generation Y* want human community She identifies them as experts in electronic and virtual communication who seem to crave actual physical presence

These three categories capture what constitutes youth today They find their meaning of life through immersion in the image centred popular culture Also postmodern youth are strong participants in the modern medium of the Internet One major factor underlying the three main classifications is identified by Hill (2001) He detects those young people whose social reality is constructed from the messages they are exposed to by the commercial media and the Internet These young people are the main subject of this research

Young people setting out to face life on their own take responsibilities and initiatives by themselves This development may be applicable to Church activities as well Letting young people take initiatives and giving them the power, independence, authority as well as credit for those initiatives may be a necessity for the Church in order to be 'young again' In a

similar vein, innovation in communications technology is opening up new ground for young people, giving them more power 'The do-it-yourself generation', a label used by Crawford and Rossiter (2006), may be a suitable appellation to capture these features of young people While this categorisation may identify some of the characteristics of young people, Crawford and Rossiter (2006, p 216) issue a marking note in this regard, observing that "Today's young – those aged 18-30 – are universal in their rejection of what they see to be extreme, oversimplified pigeonholes"

### *Why is there such interest in youth today?*

There seems to be an increased interest in youth today At a general level, there is a visible and explicit interest in young people There are bill boards featuring advertisements oriented towards young people or depicting images of them Both business and media target youth Many bank websites have a special section for them The world of entertainment is also orientated towards youth Governments have special youth departments and so have international bodies such as the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) Also there are voluntary organisations which are dedicated specifically to youth development Similarly, the Church is interested in young people

### *Apparent Alienation*

Researchers suggest that there is an apparent absence of young people from traditional spaces of worship, giving rise to anxiety among the older generation Malphurs and Malphurs (2003) report that only 34 per cent of *Generation X* and 29 per cent of *Generation Y* attend a church A similar downward trend in the faith commitment of young Catholics is noticed by Briggs (2008), based on the decrease in Mass attendance from 37 per cent in the early 1970s to 19 percent in 2002 An acceleration in the drift from the Church is observed also by Kay and

Francis (1996) In other institutions, a similar trend is noticed 'Changing expectations' and 'apparent disaffection of young people with traditional forms of participation in public life' are two phrases used by the EU as reasons for initiating a youth portal entitled the European Youth Portal (European Union, 2008)

This focus on youth is not just a recent phenomenon Much earlier, a similar alienation on the part of youth was observed by Cardinal Joseph Cardijn which inspired him to found the international organisation of Young Christian Workers (YCW) in Belgium in 1925 Powers (1967) considered YCW, together with its associated projects, as the largest Roman Catholic Organisation of the laity of that time When Cardijn returned for vacation during his first year as a seminarian, he discovered that his old school friends had abandoned the Church and religious practice and no longer looked upon him as a friend He considered that this change of attitude on the part of his friends was connected with an unprepared entry into the working environment (Trauth, 1967) The impact of industrialisation was a contributory factor at that time This observation is endorsed by Boran (1999)

As technology advanced in the industrial society, the demands for qualified workers also grew For the first time in human history there were such large agglomerations of young people in the same place To a certain extent youth became isolated from the rest of society and took on characteristics of a society apart (p 107)

These earlier developments show that alienation of young people is not new Rather, there is evidence to suggest that, early on in the last century, the progress of industrialisation impacted on young people, leading them to become alienated from the Church The establishment of YCW is an example of the Church's response to concerns about the impact



of industrialisation on youth during that period also it responded to concern about youth and delinquency, as can be seen in the next section

### *Juvenile Delinquency*

Juvenile delinquency was another key phrase in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which brought the plight of young people to the attention of the wider society. Research conducted by Healy and Alper (1941) goes back as far as 1876 in relation to criminal youth and their 'reformatories'. Similar studies were published by Mays (1972), Rutter and Giller (1983), Amos and Wellford (1967) and the U S Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1971). In relation to juvenile delinquency, Powers (1967) corroborates the need for the individual development and empowerment of a young person. In his article 'Prevention through Religion' he states that the challenge of the churches is to provide the religious and moral "climate" conducive to healthy growth to maturity (cited in Amos and Wellford, 1967). According to Johnston (1975), when such juvenile unrest brought young people into focus, the Church responded to this through the companion of youth, John Bosco. Oratories for young boys and girls established by John Bosco (1815-1888) became a beacon of light, recognised widely in Europe from 1847 onwards. In addition to these examples of a more focused interest in youth, there is a broadened interest in the concept, which is now considered

*A Universal Search for Youth* A broad thrust is discernible which underpins the interest in youth. This is evident in the fundamental quest for the spirit of youth in the universe. It is reflected in the myths of rejuvenation and events in nature. Accounts of special elixirs such as particular fruits and herbs that would make one young again are found in all cultures across the globe (Eliade cited in Clift, 1987). According to Clift (1987), this quest for 'youth' is also seen in Christianity in Jesus' invitation for spiritual renewal. No-one can see the kingdom of

God unless he is born again (Jn 3:3). Thus the interest of the Church in young people may be interpreted as an innate and fundamental quest for rejuvenation, which is a natural quest in the broader universe.

This romantic cult of youth is reflected in its contemporary expressions, according to Jagodzinski (2004, p. 233) "Metaphorically, they are the phantasmatic and fecund energy that potentially animates all persons regardless of their chronological age. Youth, from this perspective, mediates lived experience and transcendence." He refers to the postmodern culture of youth, highlighting various spaces enfolded by them such as cyberspace, seemingly disparate and meaningless modern entertainments represented in movies such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *X-files*, trends in the lyrics of pop music, new postmodern hieroglyph found in music videos that can only be read by youth and video games (Jagodzinski, 2004). This gives rise to the need to be familiar with the culture of young people. Some of its characteristics are now considered:

#### **4.2 Characteristics of Cyber-age Youth**

As discussed earlier, Careaga (2001) identified three generations which constitute the majority of Net users today: baby boomers, Generation X and the emerging Net Generation. The emerging generation, who are citizens of the cyber world, are considered here in order to explore and understand their culture. As the Internet philosopher Turkle (1996, p. 77) observes, "Today children are growing up in the computer culture, all the rest of us are at best its naturalized citizens." Some of the features of the cyber generation are set out below:

### ***Popular Culture***

Beaudoin (1998) cites pop music scholar Simon Frith in order to explain pop culture. He says that there are three ways of defining pop culture: as produced by a culture *for* the people (people consume what is fed to them), as the culture *of* the people (people consume what resonates with their own values), as the culture *by* the people (popular ways in which people live daily life). He points out that Xers are creators as much as receivers of pop culture. Their culture can be identified in the following terrain of their lives:

### ***On the Net***

The search by young people for free spaces where they can be in control, where they can feel free, where they can be with friends of the same peer group and not under the supervision and control of adults, is identified by Boran (1999) as one of the core elements of youth culture. This results in the 'generation lap', as Careaga (2001) labels it, as the children are lapping their parents in their knowledge of computers and the digital revolution. They navigate on the Internet almost by instinct, while their parents grapple with trying to understand how it works. A study on the network society reveals these details of Internet use: "The average age of Internet users in the US in the year 2000 was 36 years and in the UK and China it was below 30. In Russia only 15 % of the Internet users were older than 45" (Castells, 2000, p 377).

The above statistics, which confirm that young people are the natives of the Internet, provide a persuasive argument for opening a space of ministry of relationship to young people on the Internet. Beaudoin (1998) said that, even though the number of young people using the Internet was a small percentage of the total population, it was possible to identify their influence on popular culture. This situation is changed now. As mentioned in chapter 1,

Internet use by age shows that usage is highest in 12-29 year group, reaching 93% by 2009 (Lenhart et al, 2010). This endorses the popularity of the medium for the young generation in the US. The 500 million users of Facebook (Elliot, 2010) provide similar evidence of popularity of net usage by young people. Another survey is quoted by Vogt (2011) which says that over 96% of young adults have joined a social network. This being the trend in the cyber world, the context in which many young people live their lives needs to be taken into account. This is considered next.

### ***Disintegrating Families***

Some of the challenges which face youth today are identified by Boran (1999, p. 116): "Young people are born into an environment where there are no role models and no atmosphere that will nurture growth". Careaga (2001) cites a study in the United States, undertaken in 1997, which found that four out of every of five children between the age of nine and seventeen consider a one-parent home normal. Faced with this reality, in his view, Churches that build ministries on the assumption that two-parent households are the norm will need to change their approaches to ministry. The Church can no longer guarantee the faith formation of young people as it happened in the past when families were instructed to take care of their children (Careaga, 2001). However, it is suggested that new ways can be found to introduce this relationship of God to His People through the use of the Internet.

### **4.3 Natives of the Post-modern Era**

Young people of today are natives of the post-modern age. The cultural shift from the modern to the postmodern, which began in the 1960s, is astonishing. Anyone born after 1960 is "native" to this era. Other generations are naturalized citizens. So, whether native or naturalized, we all are part of the postmodern world (Gallagher, 2003).

Post-modern thinking encourages questioning and a critical response to modernity, especially in terms of humanism and enlightenment thinking. Ministry in post-modern mode raises a series of questions for modernist assumptions. People no longer speak of universal principles and laws, valid for all times and places. Instead they look for the particular historical, cultural, social and familial values that may have contributed to this particular set of principles and laws being useful in a particular set of circumstances. In the absence of grand narratives, particular movements, with clearly defined limited objectives, are now in vogue (Ward, 1997). As Boran (1999) sees it, in a post-modern culture, the place of residence is increasingly less important. It is possible to live in a rural area and be as well informed about the latest fashion in New York or London as youth who live in a large city in any part of the globe. In such circumstances, networking is of importance. Those ministering to youth and others can become more and more connected across the globe through the use of the Internet and local initiatives and practices can assume a greater significance for many more people.

According to Careaga (2001), young people steeped in this postmodern culture and heavily influenced by what the entertainment industry feeds them, pick and choose the ingredients for their own personal spirituality from a variety of belief systems. He adds that they have a self-centered, practical and personal faith form that is more about stress reduction than salvation, more therapeutic than theological. However the presence of the Church on the Internet may provide spiritual insights to this post-modern generation who look for all kinds of information online. The challenge arises in finding new ways of packaging the spirituality and faith of the Catholic tradition in ways which befit the technology of the Internet, as well as the culture and taste of the post-modern generation.

### *Generational Conflict*

As Careaga (2001) sees it, the post-modern, multicultural, global, networked society and the forces sweeping our cultural landscape today - forces that N-Geners accept matter-of-factly as “just the way things are”- pose dramatic challenges for the Church Beaudoin (1998) argues that, while most people in the past would not consider fashion and Music TV as a spiritual need, to Generation Xers they are as dear as any of our grandparent’s religious devotions Careaga (2001) quotes Christian sociologist Barna who considers that the Church stands at the crossroads today and must choose between two paths

She must choose between defending the traditional structure, which impedes effective ministry, or embarking on a new path that allows her to conform to her biblical mandate and still respond to the practical needs of her members

(cited in Careaga, 2001, p 63)

Here Careaga identifies a possible bipolar tension for the Church in evangelising youth It involves making a 2000 year old faith, tradition and practices relevant to the present young generation Jagodzinski (2004), Livingstone (2002), and Lundby (2006) also hint at a conflict which can originate in this postmodern situation Jagodzinski (2004) argues that, today, the gulf between what is youthful and fresh and what is adult and outdated has grown considerably At the same time, Livingstone (2002) sheds light on a specific issue She observes a generation gap in the media literacy between parents and children “Young people are ready to learn in ways less than familiar to the generation of their parents and teachers” (Livingstone, 2002, p 232) Lundby (2006) also identifies this conflict

There could be interesting cultural conflicts or encounters between those adults passing on the religious tradition without much competence in digital communication and the young people used to digital communication but not very familiar with the religious tradition (Lundby, 2006, p 19)

This conflict may be solved to some extent by a mutual learning process. If the adults learn the culture and language of youth, this can help them share the religious tradition they inherited, rewritten in the language and culture of youth. In other words, the traditional structure can act as a centrifugal force for the Church to reach out to the polymorphic culture of young people. Beaudoin's (1998) words, which provide an understanding of this youth culture of youth, can help forge a new direction in the ministry of the Church to young people.

Nourished on the milk of popular culture, Generation X has developed a keen way of finding meaning in fragmentary and disparate pop culture moments.

The image is the unit of experience. Fashion conveys the image of the self and the self as the image (Beaudoin, 1998, p 45, 47)

Here Beaudoin is optimistic about postmodern youth. They are like ships sailing in a postmodern sea. The postmodern world-view is acknowledged as embracing preferences, being sceptical towards institutional authority, and personal experience as being equal to analytical or rational thought, denying any meta-narrative of meaning-making structures. A gloom seems to have descended on the initiatives for the development of young people, as this section on popular culture and other post modern developments suggests. Next, an attempt is made to reconstruct this image of youth imposed on them by postmodernism.

### *Reconstructing Youth*

“Young people in our society are not only silent. They are a step beyond silence: they are mute” (Warren, 1989, p. 27). Examples such as this which paint a dark picture of youth do not help when juvenile delinquency and other problems of this age become the gauge of understanding them. For instance, two youth ministers, Kennedy and Doyle (1998), have tried to provide some insight into young people from Ireland. Their description includes a very destructive cycle of production, promotion and consumption, industrialisation and the un-gaugeable impact of TV viewing, the influence of sexual content in advertising, the rise of non-marital and teenage births, an increase of juvenile crime (Kennedy and Doyle, 1998). Even if this provides one picture of Irish youth, there is another side to the story which is not represented in this negative and one-sided vision of reality. Warren (1989) says that very few young people are encouraged to articulate their life experience or even to consider their experiences as being valid. This may be as a result of this unbalanced generalisation.

In contrast, some recent trends endorse the initial suggestion that there is a resurgence of young people in the life of the Church. Evidence of this trend among young people is advanced by millennial writers such as Detweiler and Taylor (2003), Crawford and Rossiter (2006) and Briggs (2008). The New Ecclesial Movements in the Church, as well as the biggest international gathering of young people at World Youth Day, also suggest that some of the negative labels given to young people by postmodern thinkers may not necessarily have universal application.

### *Shedding Labels*

One major concern of postmodernism was the loss of meta-narrative (Detweiler and Taylor, 2003) – one unifying life story that fits everybody. This postmodern thought raises some



questions 'Was there ever a 'one world view' in the history of the world – one over-arching story labelled as meta-narrative?' It sounds like the claim that John Gutenberg invented the printing press, when centuries before that invention, there was printing in China (Briggs and Burke, 2005) If the western world view was seen as meta-narrative, the argument regarding loss of a meta-narrative may be true. At the same time, questions of good versus evil or matter versus spirit could be considered as a meta-narrative and they continue to exist in all cultures and so remain valid.

The point here is that there was a belief in the suppositions of postmodern thought which labelled young people and alienated them from the overall picture. Some of the observations were true, i.e., that there are many spiritual choices now. In one way, this has made young people powerful because they are offered choices. Are young people able to choose the best? This depends, first of all, on how young people are introduced to the 'product'. Are these products marketed in their language and are they 'cool'? At the same time, the claims of religions are under scrutiny also because they are being compared in their entirety.

### *Rethinking about Postmodernism*

The interpretations and conclusions of post-modernism prompt concerns. It is not the intention here to study post-modern philosophy in depth. At the same time, it can be seen that interpretations of post-modern philosophy by various people may not even represent the spirit of the time, or that there is another spirit driving the world which is not recognised by postmodern philosophers. "In other words, whatever postmodernism is, it cannot be mechanistic, systematic, or institutionalised, for all of these prioritize idea over person" (Bannon, 2007, p. 30)

If this interpretation of postmodernism truly imbibes the spirit of the time, what does it say about the intrusion of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the personal spaces of human communication? The growth of new institutions such as business chains, celebrity models and their reality shows and rock bands with millions of young followers does not seem to agree with the claims of at least some post modern proponents Therefore these claims need to be put under the microscope

*Metanarratives are not absent*

Story telling continuously moves from one platform to another It is like a train journey Those who journey will read only what is written on the walls of the train or on the signposts in the stations Instructions for travellers are written in such a way that they can be seen by travellers as they journey Also they need to be catchy and presented in large script for the fast moving recipients of the messages Turning to the Church, if it does not tell its story, others who are able to make these 'platforms' useful will reap the benefit

It is true to say that young people try to make sense of life with what they find around them (Beaudoin, 1998) A ship can be anchored only in the water of its proximity The eyes of young people can grasp the images around them, their ears like the tunes and they go after the pied pipers, with their fundamental quests for meaning and identity The grand narratives in the postmodern world may be found to have 'mutated' or taken on a new form to reach young people This is confirmed by Detweiler and Taylor (2003)

The literal truths, the cold, hard facts are tired The big mythological truths of *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, and *The Matrix* have taken their place As postmodern philosophers announce that grand, overarching metanarratives are

dead, Hollywood spends hundreds of millions of dollars on interlocking trilogies that garner global acclaim and interest. (p.38)

A resurgence of realities from the literal world to the post-literal era of the world is reflected here. They continue: "These are much more than the escapist fantasies. They are the post-literal cries of an audience, suffering from a lack of metanarratives, searching for supra-human experiences to fill their transcendence gap" (Detweiler and Taylor 2003, p. 38).

A recent study of young people, conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research, indicates a similar optimism about young people and their spiritual yearnings. In this study, Crawford and Rossiter (2006) show how youth spirituality is structured. They identify a self-transcending dimension to youth spirituality which also exhibits a social dimension. In addition, a generational difference is noticed which tends to form their spirituality in ways that are different from those of the previous generation. Also the secularisation of spirituality, differentiating between spirituality and religiosity, spiritual relativism, subjectivity of youth spirituality and an appreciation of Pentecostal/Charismatic spirituality, can be detected in their research.

### ***The re-emergence of young people***

It is submitted that, after the postmodern era, this change will occur with more power and strength because young people are able to experiment personally with what is available around them and choose what they consider to be the best. Some endeavours such as *Opus Dei*, which operates like a hardliner movement, confirm this suggestion. New Ecclesial Movements, as mentioned by John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (1988), also show signs of this optimism. In the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (John Paul II,

1990b) on the 'Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate' in 1990, the Apostolic Exhortations *Ecclesia in Europa* (2003) and the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001a), the late Pope strongly endorsed the New Ecclesial Movements as a force for new evangelisation. By 1998, there were more than 50 such movements and new forms of community life. In the words of the late Pope "There is great need for living Christian communities! And here are the movements and the new ecclesial communities they are the response, given by the Holy Spirit, to this critical challenge at the end of the millennium" (John Paul II, 1998b, para 7)

The existence of such new communities can be traced back to the same period of the beginning of the so-called postmodern generation, i.e., those born after the 1960s. These ventures were very new to the traditional Church (John Paul II, 1999a) and this may explain why they were not seen to contribute significantly to the growth of faith. This is made clear by the Pope "Their unexpected newness has given rise to questions, uneasiness and tensions, at times it has led to presumptions and excesses on the one hand, and on the other, to numerous prejudices and reservations" (John Paul II, 1998b, para 6)

It is suggested that the Internet and communications technology can be used by the Church as a tool to empower young people in the contemporary world. Much earlier examples of empowering young people can be found in both the old and New Testaments. The Lord said to Jeremiah at the time of his call, "Do not say I am only a boy, for you shall go to all to whom I sent you" (Jer 1 4-10). David, the youngest among the sons of Jesse, was chosen by Samuel to be anointed as king. Jesse said "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep. And Samuel said to Jesse, "send and bring him" (1Sam 16 1-13). In the New Testament, five thousand people were fed from five loaves and two fish brought by a young

man “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish” (Jn 6 1-14) Jesus said to the widow’s son at Nain “Young man, I say to you, rise” (Lk 7 11-17) “New wine must be put into fresh wineskins” (Lk 5 38) Could the Internet provide “fresh wineskins” to be used to empower youth, thereby rejuvenating the Church?

Young people can be said to dwell in an image-centered world. They are creators as well as receivers of popular culture. Their presence on the Net has significant influence. Their religious / spiritual formation is not guaranteed in their homes. In the post-modern age, their spiritual quest is quenched by fashion and music TV. Therefore it is considered that an image-centered ministry is needed, in order to foster relationship with these young people. This can be accomplished through the modern medium of the Internet. Would this international network (the Internet) foster connectedness between people? The nature of relationships on the Internet is explored next in order to ascertain if it facilitates building relationships between individuals, between individuals and God and between communities.

#### **4.4 Cyber Relationships: Locale of Youth Ministry**

Despite the limited social presence of online links, the Net successfully maintains strong supportive community ties, and it may be increasing the number and diversity of weak ties. The Net is specially suited to maintaining intermediate-strength ties between people who cannot see each other frequently.

(Wellman and Gulia, 1999, p. 185)

Heim (1993) explains the term *interface* as the Greek *prosopon*, which means one face facing another face. Two opposite faces make up the relationship. One face reacts to the other, who then reacts to the first one and so on *ad infinitum*. He considers this relationship as being

alive and distinct from the two faces but in a state of correlation (Heim) According to this author, the same word *prosopon* later helped to describe the Trinitarian Godhead The Father and the Son subsist together as an interface or distinct spirit This ancient word suggested spiritual interaction between eternity and time Heim considers that, in the information age, the interface shades into cyberspace which people inhabit and feel themselves moving through it into a relatively independent world with its own dimensions and rules (Heim, pp 71-82) Based on the cumulative experiences in cyberspace, online relationships are considered in the next section

### ***Online Relationships***

Castells (2000) identifies the *networking logic* or set of relationships used within information technology as an important characteristic “The morphology of the network seems to be well adapted to increasing complexity of interaction and unpredictable patterns of development arising from the creative power of such interaction” (Castells 2000, pp 70-71)

He is referring here to the physical connectivity and the resulting complexity of interactivity which reveals the underlying power of the Internet to become a network of human interaction Research conducted by scientists McKenna and Bargh of New York University's psychology department in 1998 provides a vivid picture of the Internet's impact on relationships They found that people were indeed using the Internet to form close relationships McKenna and Bargh (2004) state

The evidence suggests that rather than being an isolating, personally and socially maladaptive activity, communicating with others over the Internet not only helps to maintain close ties with one's family and friends, but also, if the individual is

so inclined, facilitates the formation of close and meaningful new relationships within a relatively safe environment (p 582)

In his book *Media Psychology*, Giles (2003) provides some interesting insights into online relationships. He argues that, for some authors, the experience of socialising via computer is barely distinguishable from face-to-face interaction, even if both are profoundly different. Relationships in cyberspace lack gestural and other non-verbal cues that convey paralinguistic verbal utterances, supplementing the verbal content of our communication, although “emoticons” have evolved as partial substitution for such gestures (Giles, 2003, p 271). The text-based nature of online communication may bestow advantages over face-to-face communication for some Internet users. It is particularly helpful for those users who feel marginalised in face-to-face interaction due to both concealed and conspicuous reasons. Giles points out that, for some champions of the Internet, cyber-relations are just different from other relationships and their unique nature has the potential to change the way humans interact in general. Cyberspace has the potential for a new concept of self. This may be confirmed by the studies of Castells (2000) who notes that “New information technologies are not simply tools to be applied, but processes to be developed” (p 31). This is highly significant for on-line ministry. As Giles (2003) observes “Cyberspace offers the potential for a completely new concept of self, in which we are no longer constrained by geography, embodiment, personal history, and so on. In this parallel universe we can re-invent ourselves” (p 268).

At the same time, Beaudoin (1998) suggests that, in the search for perfect speed (ever-faster computers and breakneck modem connection rates) and full presence (advanced multi-tasking, supercharged networks, increased hours and modes of access and “real” simulation),

cyberspace is a metaphor for two quests. The first is full interpersonal interaction, which he interprets as the *I-thou* relationships of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. The second is an attempt to transcend human experience, imagining the Web as a metaphor for God. He implies that young people's immersion in cyberspace evidences their yearning for full presence in both divine and human relations.

Giles (2003) identifies how an empowerment through the Internet takes place between societies which are dispersed across the globe. Here the Internet facilitates the creation of diasporic cyber communities. Also communities across the globe can attain a new identity through the connectivity of the Internet, emerging as virtual communities which are discussed in the next section.

### *Virtual Communities*

Kelly (1994) considers that

Cyberspace is the mall of network culture. It is the territory where the counterintuitive logic of distributed networks meets the odd behaviour of human society. And it is expanding rapidly. Cyberspace is a resource that increases the more it is used. (Kelly, 1994, p. 185)

His observation gives a glimpse of aspects of society where it is trying to replicate itself in cyberspace. Virtual communities show the essential nature of human beings living in cyberspace - the need to 'connect'. Rheingold (2000), the author of *Virtual Communities*, confirms this argument.



Virtual community sits atop a hierarchy of abstractions – language, technology, computing, networking, many-to-many discussion. Virtual community is also built upon a succession of technologies and ways of life we choose to use and live in and are shaped by, because they gave many people freedom and power

(Rheingold, 2000, p 147)

A San Francisco based online group called, Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (WELL), started by a number of aging entrepreneurs, is a well-known online community. Sociologists maintain that the social glue which binds the WELL into a genuine community is a complex blend of participants' social skills, their amazing collective fund of expert knowledge and their willingness to support community members when they are in trouble (Naughton, 1999)

Castells (2000, p 386) provides a definition of Virtual Communities. "A virtual community is generally understood as a self-defined electronic network of interactive communication organised around a shared interest or purpose, although sometimes communication becomes the goal in itself". He indicates that tens of thousands of such communities were created throughout the world in the 1990s, most of them based in the US but increasingly reaching out on a global scale. There are studies which criticise the quality and implications of online communities, saying that they decrease participants' communication with family members and social circles, while increasing their loneliness. An analysis by Wellman and his collaborators in 1996 proved, however, that virtual communities need not be opposed to physical communities (cited in Castells, 2000). Virtual communities are different forms of community with specific rules and dynamics which interact with other forms of community. They are communities, albeit not physical, and they do not replicate the patterns of communication and interaction in physical communities. While they are not unreal, they

operate in a different plane of reality (Wellman et al , cited in Castells, 2000) Discussion on youth ministry can encourage the formation of such communities in the Internet where the relationship of young people can be facilitated in the light of faith It has been established that secular communities are active in cyberspace The possibility of establishing faith communities in cyberspace is now explored

### *Cyber Communities of Faith*

Beaudoin (1998) states clearly that cyberspace - particularly the Internet - is an appropriate medium to serve as a communal centre for Generation-X He notes that there are many opportunities for communitarian action on the Internet, including organising relief for victims of natural disasters, circulating protest petitions and gathering like minded people from around the globe Since these communities can be as bonded as some physical communities, they are no less real He finds great potential for Xers in cyberspace and states that it can accommodate both like-minded and indifferent users who want to form cyber communities of faith

He asserts that cyberspace gives Xers a voice in religious matters, using technology with which they are comfortable For a generation so hesitant to talk about its faith, cyberspace affords opportunities for intimate faith discussion without necessitating face-to-face communication The Net gives Xers scope to deepen their spiritual life by connecting with other spiritually curious Xers and people from around the world with a different religiosity He claims that dedication to a cyber community can be as gratifying and important as allegiance to any real religious institution In this way, Xers challenge religious institutions to rethink the definition of community He views virtual communities as augmenting real communities rather than being a substitute for them (Beaudoin, 1998)

Cyberspace has been hailed by many as an historical revolution in which technology is no longer a means of mastering the human environment but, as Lajoie (1996) states, becomes the human environment. The Church articulates the need to utilise the new media space for the development of young people. Studies on ministry show that youth ministry is basically relational. Since the Internet helps to achieve relationship through this medium and also because the life of post-modern youth is thoroughly linked with cyber culture, the question of undertaking ministry to young people in this globally 'created' environment has been a main concern of this research.

The theology of ministry, articulated in a relational perspective, captures youth ministry as reaching out to young people and ministering to their culture of 'connectedness'. The reality of cyber relationships and cyber communities makes the Internet a suitable environment for the faith development of young people. The openness of the Church to understand the 'irreverent' (Beaudoin, 1998) spiritual culture of the young generation opens the way for accomplishing a ministry online. In time, this ministry may help to move young people from the terrain of cyberspace to the real world of relationships. Participation in the sacraments and liturgy, which is considered to be the ultimate and real experience of Christian faith, can be realised at the second stage, after the young people have been contacted through the Internet.

Building on the argument so far, the task now is to devise a method for implementing youth ministry online. A tentative approach to accomplishing this task is presented in the next section.

#### 4.5 From Hyper Text to Hyper Being: A Proposal

Young people's freedom, their ability to judge and choose in a non-controlled setting and their desire to emerge as mature and responsible citizens are the reasons which underpin this new thinking about postmodern youth. The challenge of how to acknowledge, develop and empower the younger generation still remains. It is submitted that the Internet to which young people are attracted in great numbers, has great potential here.

The wisdom of the philosopher William James (1892) captures the concept behind hypertext: "My thought belongs with my other thoughts, and your thought belongs with your other thoughts. Whether anywhere in the room there be a mere thought, which is nobody's thought, we have no means of ascertaining" (section 2). There is a marked difference between a page in a book and a page on the Internet. The growth in the technology of hypertext on the Internet has opened up new frontiers, linking human beings together. It can be labelled the technology of hyperself or hyperperson in Web 2.0.

This leads to the notion of a cybersoul whereby an individual is connected, just as texts are connected, by hypertexting online. As discussed in chapter 3 on the Internet, if de Chardin's "appearance of life in evolution" is attributed to this point of the evolution of the Internet, the evolution of Web 2.0 may be referred to as a critical point of 'hominization' (Mooney, 1964, p. 39) in cyberspace. This denotes the latest development of individual human presence in virtual communities where an individual seems to have achieved power in the media, unlike in the past.

### *The Reality of the Virtual*

*Syneidesis* is the Greek root of the word consciousness. According to Dewart (1989), it stood for “the knowledge obtained through consultation with someone who has privileged access to confidential or generally unavailable information” (p 45). This was in contrast to understanding based merely on one’s own resources. The reliability of this inside information depended on the authenticity of the source.

Later on, Dewart says that it came to mean any knowledge obtained from consultation with oneself. The conscious experiencer is, as a consequence: a) able to understand and appreciate the reality of the real, b) capable of experiencing his own reality, c) able to create a positive identity for himself after appreciating both his reality and that of the world (Dewart, 1989). Here consciousness is constituted through the interaction of the self with the reality of the real.

In relation to online experience, these findings about consciousness may be questioned by those who log on to the Internet, seeking some information. A person who searches the Internet may be able to get more knowledge about almost everything online rather than actually having those objects in front of him/her. More information about the constitutive elements of an object and its nuances may be gained from the Internet than from interacting with the reality of the object. The knowledge landscapes of the Internet may provide a person with the wheel, so that he or she does not have to invent it. Then, the wisdom behind the method and process of experiencing one’s own reality in relation to interaction with the world and the created identity of oneself through this interaction, may have to be looked at from the point of view of online experience as well. Here the reality of the virtual becomes the norm of constituting consciousness. Castells’ (2000) observation corroborates this

argument “ the human mind is a direct productive force, not just a decisive element of the production system. Thus, computers, communications systems and genetic decoding and programming are all amplifiers and extensions of the human mind” (p. 31). In this research, the reality of the Church is being presented in this new medium of virtual reality.

McQuail (2000) identifies the following dimensions that are relevant and help differentiate ‘new’ from ‘old’ media: the degree of interactivity, social presence, autonomy, playfulness and the degree of privacy. These can be considered as some essential elements to be taken into consideration by the Church in order to present itself effectively on the mosaic of the Internet, when interacting with youth. Some further reflections on interactivity now follow.

### ***The Postmodern Experience of the Self and Interactivity***

In sketching the profile of the self in action, Schrag (1997) begins with the celebrated Cartesian phrase *cogito ergo sum* – I think therefore I am. According to him, the variation in the experience of the postmodern self transforms the phrase into ‘I choose therefore I am’. A further ‘deconstructive redescription’ of the experience of the self amends this into ‘We interact, therefore we are’. In *A Matrix of Meanings*, Detweiler and Taylor (2003), confirm this: “The postmodern person yearns for community and connectedness” (p. 78). As Schrag, (1997) sees it, “Community is constitutive of selfhood. It fleshes out the portrait of the self by engendering a shift of focus from the self present to itself to the self as present to, for, and with the other” (p. 78). This seems to be true in the case of the Internet also: *we interact virtually, therefore we are*. This interactivity, in the context of evangelisation, is considered next.

### *Interactivity and Faith Development of Youth. New Approaches*

How is the Church using the Internet to reach out to young Catholics? This question is posed by Heaven (2008). Observing that the Catholic Church lacks a robust online presence, he suggests that, while schools, parents, chaplains and parish priests do a lot of work with youth in the Church, the Vatican and the bishops should provide an interactive, readily available source of guidance for Catholics online. The issue of reaching out to young people by using the latest technological medium of interaction for them is a major challenge for the Church.

The phenomenon of sharing faith needs to be considered. Various terms such as sharing faith, religious instruction, religious education, faith development and catechesis may be used by different parties involved in the process. Two broad areas, religious education and catechesis, are discussed below.

Religious education can be used as a generic term, assuming different meanings according to the source of education, its agents and content (Osmer and Schweitzer, 2003). Kieran and Hession (2005) explain that first of all, it can be an “educational process by which people are invited to explore the human religious traditions that protect and illuminate the transcendent dimension of their lives” (p. 32). They observe that this definition is more associated with education as an area of study. Also religious education can encompass mere study of religion within an academic structure, without the intention of deepening the faith (See Warren, 1989). For instance, a Catholic student could study Hinduism or Buddhism in great depth while having no intention of adopting either of those beliefs. “The effort of particular groups to transmit their respective ways of life to the younger generation” represents another way of religious education, according to Moran (1983, p. 12). In the strict Catholic understanding of

religious education, it is seen as a programme of religious formation and faith development, using the language of catechesis (Kieran and Hession, 2005)

The word 'catechesis' originates from the Greek verb *katechein* 'To resound', 'to echo', or 'to hand down' are its derivative meanings (Kieran and Hession, 2005, p 61) In its *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC, 1998), the Church includes catechesis as one moment within the whole process of evangelisation

Catechesis is one of these moments - a very remarkable one - in the whole process of evangelisation The "moment" of catechesis is that which corresponds to the period in which conversion to Jesus Christ is formalised, and provides a basis for first adhering to him (GDC para 63)

Is the Church able to implement catechesis effectively? Moran (1983) identifies a tension between religion and education "Put in starkest contrast, education is concerned with finding or creating order in this world, while religion is a going beyond this world" (p 184) He identifies historical trends which highlight this tension between religious education and Christian religious education, noting that education in religious matters was central to life in the seventeenth century People from families, church and school came together to teach the Bible, doctrine or morals Continuing, he reports that the establishment of Catholic schools by the Church was in response to a secular trend prevailing in the eighteenth century which did not encourage Catholic education in regular schools While this development gave religious instruction an educational context, Moran reports that the nineteenth century saw a separation of religion and education He uses the phrase 'Christian education' when referring to the learning of Christian beliefs (Moran, 1983)



There can be a difference between religion as part of the curriculum and Christian religious education in the language of catechesis. Religious education as part of the curriculum may not meet the requirements of catechesis, as understood by the Church. Kieran and Hession (2005) note that, currently here in Ireland, religious education as part of the curriculum is catechetical, having sacramental preparation as a central purpose. They observe that this model is under strain in view of the decline of Catholic religious culture and practice in Irish society in general.

This gives rise to the need to distinguish between religious education of youth as an important and particular duty of the Church, as opposed to religious education as part of the curriculum in a Catholic school setting. These two approaches may differ in their methodologies as well. The phenomenological philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), considered that "Man's life, his very spirit, is being studied according to the methods of natural science, with the effect that nature and spirit are considered equal realities, and with the ensuing danger that the spirit is naturalised" (cited in Ramos, 1989, p. 404).

The GDC (1998) speaks about the divine pedagogy of catechesis:

Catechesis as communication of divine Revelation, is radically inspired by the pedagogy of God, as displayed in Christ and in the Church. Hence it receives its constitutive characteristics and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it sets out a synthesis to encourage a true experience of faith, and thus a filial encounter with God (GDC para 143).

As the Church may not exercise full control over the curriculum and syllabus in a school setting, it is doubtful that the Church can fulfil its task of catechetical duty in this setting.

Also some pupils may not be able to attend Catholic Schools For instance Warren (1989) reports that fewer than half of the Catholic children in the US attend Catholic schools In such circumstances, it is necessary to reach out to them by other means

Therefore, the methodology, structure and climate in which information regarding faith is imparted may need to be reviewed In cases where there is no catechetical programme other than a curriculum-oriented religious education, young people may not have an opportunity to learn and assimilate the Catholic faith This indicates the need for a new way of handing on the faith to them It is submitted that the development of a new catechetical programme on the Internet is one way of contributing to effective faith formation for young people In the context of this new locale of interactivity which is widely used by young people, an appropriate methodology needs to be developed which facilitates sharing information online regarding supernatural realities The Internet can help the Church in taking “another road” (Lk 2 12) in order to evangelise young people

### *Social Networking and Youth*

As mentioned earlier Mc Quail (2000) identified the need for playfulness in new media The key word among young people is ‘fun’ On the online networks, there is active participation between young people in order to create fun, using their own creativity and the ‘raw materials’ provided online which can create an atmosphere of fun What are those ‘raw materials’ available online which produce fun? They include the possibility of uploading music, videos, the opportunity to ‘talk’ and ‘block’ as well

‘Excitement’ is a word used by young people to represent expectations about life Boredom seems to be the opposite of it Entertainment can provide excitement for a young person It is

a time when somebody is either involved in an action or observing some action where one is able to forget about oneself. As Granfield (1991) observes, spirituality “is primarily practical, it looks to action, to love in action. We achieve union with God by an ongoing series of decisions that open up the mind to consciousness of the divine presence” (p. 148). If the Church is able to provide opportunities for young people either to take part in this action of mystical union with God or journey with others who hold similar interests, this can generate instances of excitement. Young people expect and experience fun and excitement in life. These expectations might be understood as material expressions of one person’s longing for a mystical experience. In other words, their longing for the ultimate is reflected in their longing for the world.

### *Social Networking*

Social networking enables young people to be concrete about their relationship with their friends. It helps them to be direct and clear about relationships. Some things which they are not able to articulate in a face-to-face interaction can be expressed without inhibition in the online ‘talks’. Social networking provides a more comfortable milieu for young people. The natural ‘log on’ to the Internet and consequent social networking sites may be compared to ‘initiation ceremonies’. The online interaction has a whole new language which attracts the young while being almost alien to most of the older generation.

The underlying principles behind the concepts, it seems, have yet to be put under the microscope. Some considerations are

- (a) The independence young people enjoy because of a space they own online,
- (b) An iconic simulation of their real life interactions where they are able to experiment and learn the boundaries and horizons of relationships in their own privacy,

(c) Objectification of one's own self online where some interactions are made known around the world and the rest end up in private spaces,

(d) Absence of another person may give young people the opportunity to tread on their own, without inhibition, and

(e) Questions of identity of the person who is interacting, the usefulness and the real nature and intensity of relationships online, are also to be ascertained. The physical connectivity of the Internet throughout the world, its ability to provide personal representation and participation and its ability to manage the interactivity with accountability, can make online interaction feasible

According to Granfield (1991) "The mind begins with the data of sense and consciousness proceeds through insight and judgement to the mystery that we call God" (p 17). The data of sense that can be received in an online relationship are mainly visual. Online relationship is only a part of the means through which data are received into the consciousness, since we live in this world. But it happens that the information on a person's profile acts like a repository, as individuals can access it and retrieve it whenever they wish. This profile and information moves with them wherever they move in this world. Friends also move along and their spaces are available for them to write messages or comments on them. Once they accept another person as a friend, they give permission to that person to write on their 'scrap' or 'message wall' and *vice versa*. In one way, the reality of another person in one way is present to them more frequently or on a 24X7 basis. While there is a lot of agreement, there are limitations also to this presence.

### *Consciousness Connected*

Just as a magnet attracts particles of steel, the Internet attracted a number of spheres of human living to the information superhighway 'Mosaic', the first ever browsing software, as its title indicates, means an assortment. It was described in the *New York Times* in December 1993 as 'the first window into cyberspace' (cited in Briggs and Burke, 2005, p. 244). Is the Church represented in this mosaic of convergence in cyberspace? Is cyberspace opening a window to the world of the young? Convergence on the information superhighway has brought together a complex mixture of various areas of human existence.

'Facebook' (or My Space) is a space of myself. Participating individuals look at this personal representation of themselves every day, can change their profile, add new inspirations to it, e.g., photos, videos, can go back to it, change it whenever they wish. Thus such a personal space represents and reflects a conscious self. Like human consciousness, it may not expose all that is in the consciousness of a person. Since this exposition of the self takes place in a public space, it may present only that which the person feels can be shared with others. Also it may be the case that one is able to objectify one's personal self in the *tabula rasa* of a personal page on the Internet. Here the word *tabula rasa* is used to mean a clean slate or tablet from which the inscription can be erased any time, ready to be written upon again. On a blank page, individuals create an identity for themselves, write their own profiles and post photos which represent them. As happens in the process of interaction with the objects of the world, their identity evolves. In this online space, individual identity is symbolised digitally and made visible to others. This also becomes a space of individual interaction.

It is considered that if the icon of the Church is missing on a person's monitor in the mosaic of various available icons, the Church is going to miss out. Over the centuries of evolution,

the Church has become a matrix of many cultures and numerous spiritualities. This 'many-ness' within the 'one' Catholic Church may enable it to understand, journey with and welcome the postmodern generation who are fed on the 'many-ness' around them. By 'many-ness' here is meant the influx of knowledge available at the tip of one's finger. Availing of the Internet, the Church can become visible and accessible to that generation.

### *Interiority and the Internet*

William James (1892) argues that "The only states of consciousness that we naturally deal with are found in personal consciousness, minds, selves, concrete particular I's and you's" (section 2). A subject is conscious when operating minimally in the dream state, normally in the waking state, or optimally in the mystical state. There is an awareness of its various levels of consciousness: experiencing, understanding, knowing, feeling, deliberating, and choosing with freedom and responsibility (Granfield, 1991). A person who has logged on to the Net is not just at the minimal level of consciousness but at a more active, open and higher level due to choosing to log on. This arises because there is a basic alertness of the brain with its visual readiness and openness of the self looking for friendship, movement/activity and excitement. Searle (1992) submits that "Conscious states are caused by . . . features of the brain" (para. 2).

Therefore the argument here is that, in an online interaction, there may be more opportunity to 'talk' to the brain (mind) without the distractions of the senses. There may be more clarity in thought, since it has to be written in an intelligible language. Reflections (as in meditation) on a communicated matter may then raise questions in the mind. Since the matter can be retained and retrieved, clarifications may be received promptly with reference to the available data. The state of consciousness of a person who is interacting online may be compared to

that initial step (stage) in the growth process towards enlightened consciousness. The description of some qualities of a person who is on the journey towards super consciousness, as found in *Gita*, is described by Vyas (1984): "Sense-objects cease for him, who does not enjoy them with his senses; but the taste for them persists. This relish also disappears in the case of the man of stable mind when he sees the Supreme" (p. 135).

Even if this describes a person who has almost attained a mystical experience, online information sharing may open up further opportunities for enlightenment through knowledge. This thought may interest the behavioural scientists who value the importance of sensations and neural mechanisms. Therefore, initiating instances of interaction, as described above, leading to stimulation of the mind, can open up research opportunities founded on understanding the characteristics of the phenomenon of online interaction.

### *Interaction Online*

The transition from normal consciousness to an enlightened consciousness is a creative process and involves movement. This final destination of achieving the unity between the self of God and the self of man is the goal of Catholic thought. Mysticism is common to a lot of religious traditions and stands as the starting point of interaction between them. The unifying factor can be mysticism, accepting the individual differences in their evolution and practices. Therefore the language of mysticism can be a starting point of evangelisation online which may be of interest also to other religious traditions. In addition, mysticism may speak to all because it is peaceful, tolerant and eco-friendly. Interaction on the Internet, however, is not embodied but electronic. Even then, in this context, the Internet evangeliser does not have to be concerned about online sacramentality, since mystical presence is not necessarily a result of sacramental celebration. This does not mean that mystical experience is completely free of

embodied activity Online interaction can share information regarding mystical experiences which, in turn, can stimulate the experience in human consciousness to prepare for contemplation

An important issue raised by Deikman (1968) is relevant here

The content of the mystical experience reflects not only its unusual mode of consciousness but also the particular stimuli being processed through that mode The mystic experience can be beatific, satanic, revelatory, or psychotic, depending on the stimuli predominant in each case (p 233)

The point to be made here is that the Church can provide the information which can act as a stimulus If the Church is not providing enough to stimulate people to be in communion with the presence of their supreme friend, Jesus Christ, there are a lot of alternative stimuli available in the world around them Young people's consciousness will easily be stimulated by what is readily available to them, which may eventually develop a mystical experience in them that, as mentioned above, is different from the beatific or the divine As the Sufi scholar, Shah (1968) has rightly pointed out, "It is said that when a horse cannot find grass, it will accept hay For want of the green grass of Truth they accepted the dry hay with which he filled their mangers" (p 283)

### *Online Faith Friends*

Human beings tend to appropriate the technology to suit our requirements (Thurlow et al, 2004) Making use of the medium of the Internet to converse with the minds of young people is expected to develop their interiority It is proposed that the interconnectedness of personalities may be an infrastructure to build this task online (Gallagher, 2003) Creating a



space of interactivity by authenticating a faith friend and allowing him/her to journey together with any young person online may be a way of deepening interiority

The process of developing interiority may be looked at from various mystical traditions Buddha believed that one can overcome the causes of sufferings by right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration (Nicholas-Hays and Breaux, 1998) In the traditional Buddhist setting, a student seeks refuge to a lama who initiates a new student in a ceremony These scholars (1998) explain that “going to a refuge is a symbolic way of acknowledging that we are alienated from the true self and that we are entrusting ourselves to the guidance of the Awakened-Mind within us” (p 52) Also, in Hindu thought, a person who seeks “must necessarily approach a *guru* who is characterised by composure of mind, self-control, love, etc Even one that is well-versed in the *sastras* (doctrines of truth) should not set about seeking Brahma-knowledge by himself” (Indich, 1980, p 112) Jesus who was *Emmanuel* - God with us - also clarified the nature of this accompaniment of God, “I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father” (John 15 15) The friendship of Jesus involves learning through accompaniment Some practical elements of the concept of a faith friend are discussed below

### *Faithfriend as a Mentor*

The concept of a ‘faith friend’ is relatively new in terms of on-line evangelisation but does relate to more widely used professional development concepts such as ‘mentor’ or ‘coach’ There is an existing literature on mentoring or coaching relating to human resource management for employees of various organisations As Smith (2007) explains

In mentoring, junior members of staff are allocated a senior member of staff outside the normal line of command. The junior member will have an opportunity to review, in confidence, his or her progress, air worries or concerns and obtain guidance” (p 367)

The creation of a mentoring culture in the area of initial teacher education is suggested by writers such as Starcevich (2009), Donaldson (2008), Sweeny (2008) and Rowley (1997) while others (e.g., Heathfield, 2010, Zachary, 2005, Lindenberger, 2005) identify its importance as part of continuous professional development

As well as this general literature on mentoring, there is a specific literature of relevance to evangelisation which is considered briefly below. Traditionally, those preparing for baptism are given a sponsor who is expected to accompany the baptised person as a God parent on his or her life journey (Saunders, 2003). Also, the notion of a spiritual director is firmly established within the Christian tradition. Sellner (2002), Anderson and Reese (2000) and English (1998) identify this type of mentoring accompaniment in the Christian mystical tradition. Mentoring, in the context of faith, is described by Matthaer (1996) as “a nurturing relationship that facilitates the meaning-making, meaning discerning activity of life, in response to God” (p 15). In the present study, Faithfriends (FFs) are expected to act as spiritual mentors to young people (referred to as Cybersouls – CSs) who want to deepen their understanding of faith.

According to Anderson and Reese (2000), a mentor “is one who is able to create a space of trust and intimacy” (p 12). Intellect, memory and will are considered by the great mystic,

John of the Cross, as faculties of the soul that requires instruction for purification<sup>7</sup>. Parks (2000) understands mentoring accompaniment as being supportive, challenging, inspirational and in dialogue with the mentored. Matthaei (1996) considers that faith mentoring has relational, incarnational and contextual dimensions. As envisaged in this research the attitude of a FF should incorporate the above dimensions. It is expected that a FF will develop a relationship with his/her CS. It is incarnational because FFs are representing a particular youth movement or community while they are expected to be proficient in their faith practices. Their adeptness in ICT skills will ensure their proficiency in the context of cyberspace. Active collaboration, a conducive atmosphere and attitude, a professional relationship, a spiritual dimension and an interactive process orientation are suggested by English (1998) as some basic guidelines for mentorship. Accordingly, active collaboration of various contributors including the Church, youth movements, designers of catechetical programmes and ICT resources, is required in this mentoring space.

The Eastern texts also insist on the necessity of being guided by a *guru* (dispeller of darkness) (Indich, 1980), for safety's sake as well as in order to attain the spiritual goal. In western religion, a spiritual "advisor" serves as a guide and teacher. The presence of a motivating and organising conceptual structure and the encouragement of a teacher are undoubtedly important in helping people to persist in their journey of faith (Deikman, 1968).

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

By analysing the world of contemporary young people, this chapter helped to clarify how an online ministry of evangelisation to young people can be initiated by the Church. To begin, a broad review the concept of youth was undertaken. It dealt with the etymology of youth,

---

<sup>7</sup> John of the Cross, Theresa of Avila and many other mystics in the Christian tradition have been proposed by English (1998), Anderson and Reese (2000) and Sellner (2002) as exemplars of effective faith mentoring.

presented various views on young people and highlighted the contemporary interest in them people. In addition, ways of learning about young people were considered.

The next section identified some of the main characteristics of young people today while their position as natives of the post-modern era was considered in the following section. Then cyber relationships were reviewed. These were seen as presenting an opportunity for the Church to reach out to young people. Various forms of online communities were analysed also in the context of building faith communities.

Finally, the possibility of developing such a connectedness was explored, viewing the Internet as a tool to empower young people on their faith journey, briefly introducing the concept of a Faithfriend mentoring a Cybersoul.

This chapter concluded the overall review of the literature. The next step in the study was to proceed to the fieldwork. Details of this part of the project are given in chapter 5, 6 and 7 which now follows, beginning with an account of the *Cybersouls* web portal in the next chapter (chapter 5).

**PART - II**  
**FIELDWORK**

## CHAPTER 5

### ***CYBERSOULS: DESIGN, PILOTING AND IMPLEMENTATION***

The focus turns to the fieldwork in this chapter. It describes the design, development, piloting and implementation of the online project, *www Cybersouls ie*, building on the review of the literature and the theoretical perspectives of the previous three chapters.

This online project was developed in order to investigate the research questions which are set out below. The chapter begins by delineating various aspects of the design of the project. Then the piloting process is discussed and its implementation is described. This is followed by an account of the data collection and case study selection.

#### **5.1 Design of the *Cybersouls* Project**

The research questions which guided the study are set out in this section, together with the main objectives of the project. Then the research design is detailed.

##### ***Research Questions***

The key research question which inspired the design of the project is to examine how the Internet can be used as an environment for mentoring young people on their religious faith journey. This is set in the wider context of investigating how an effective web presence can be developed to help value based communities, such as the Catholic Church, relate to young people on a global level.

Related research questions which contributed to shaping the project are set out below

- (a) How can the Church make use of technology to *reach out* to the youth in their new habitats or socialising spaces?
- (b) What skills and tools would be needed by the Church in adapting to the new medium of the Internet?
- (c) Considering the various 'moments of evangelisation' developed over the years in the Church, to what extent is the Internet useful as a tool to continue this task?
- (d) How can the freedom and digital ingenuity of a young person be a source of momentum for New Evangelisation?
- (e) How can the information shared online influence the consciousness of young people to inform their understanding about faith?
- (f) What is the potential of the Internet as an environment for the evangelisation of young people?
- (g) How can the Internet empower young people as active participants in evangelisation using the Internet?
- (h) What are some of the pastoral and theological opportunities afforded by the Internet as a means of evangelisation?
- (i) The Internet provides the tools, the Church provides the atmosphere and young people are the participants. How can these seemingly distant cultural spaces be mutually inculturated?

These related research questions were subject to regular review during the study, as advised by Yin (2003)

### *Operationalisation of the Research Questions*

At a more practical level, the above research questions paved the way for the following objectives to be achieved in the project

- To establish the potential role of the Internet as an instrument in the evangelisation of young people,
- To facilitate transformative virtual meetings of young people and Faithfriends described in detail later in order to animate faith in Jesus Christ, from a Catholic perspective

#### Specific Objectives

- 1 To share faith related information between
  - Members who log on to the site (referred to as Cybersouls) and
  - Leaders and members (Faithfriends representing Catholic youth movements such as Jesus Youth (CS))
- 2 To enhance faith through online mentoring using social networking technology, by
  - Inviting Cybersouls to join a faith-related community engaging in online faith development activities,
  - Posting offline activities online, so that those who log on may also come together to worship and engage in other faith related commitments offline and *vice versa*
- 3 To identify young people from different parts of the world who have a common interest in faith, from a Catholic perspective, enabling them to
  - Share their narratives of faith,
  - Discuss faith related anxieties and struggles,
  - Identify opportunities and challenges in their faith journey;
  - Share online resources for promoting faith development



Details of the project design are described below

### ***The Cybersouls Project Elements of the Design***

It falls, in particular, to young people, who have an almost spontaneous affinity for the new means of communication, to take on the responsibility for the evangelisation of this 'digital continent' Be sure to announce the Gospel to your contemporaries with enthusiasm You know their fears and their hopes, their aspirations and their disappointments (Benedict XVI, 2009)

*Cybersouls* is a project centred on young people Its aim is to develop faith through online networking Paving the way for this project, the previous three chapters have considered the concept of evangelisation in the Church, the nature of communication online and the participation of young people in this process

This research is set within an online initiative of evangelisation of young people Here, Faithfriends, a concept detailed later, represent a value based community (the Catholic Church) Young people who want to deepen their faith online are identified as Cybersouls Those who accompany the Cybersouls are called Faithfriends In this project, the specific catechetical content of faith development, termed *Scrolls*, provides the content focus for the interaction between these two parties, namely Faithfriends and Cybersouls, using the opportunities available on the Internet

The project is centred on the following online activities

- A member of Jesus Youth or any other appropriate youth movement agrees to be an online Faithfriend,

- Cybersouls register online to take part in the project and are then assigned a Faithfriend to accompany them during the project,
- Materials to promote faith development, called *Scrolls*, are provided to facilitate this interaction

A detailed explanation of Faithfriends, Cybersouls and *Scrolls* is given below

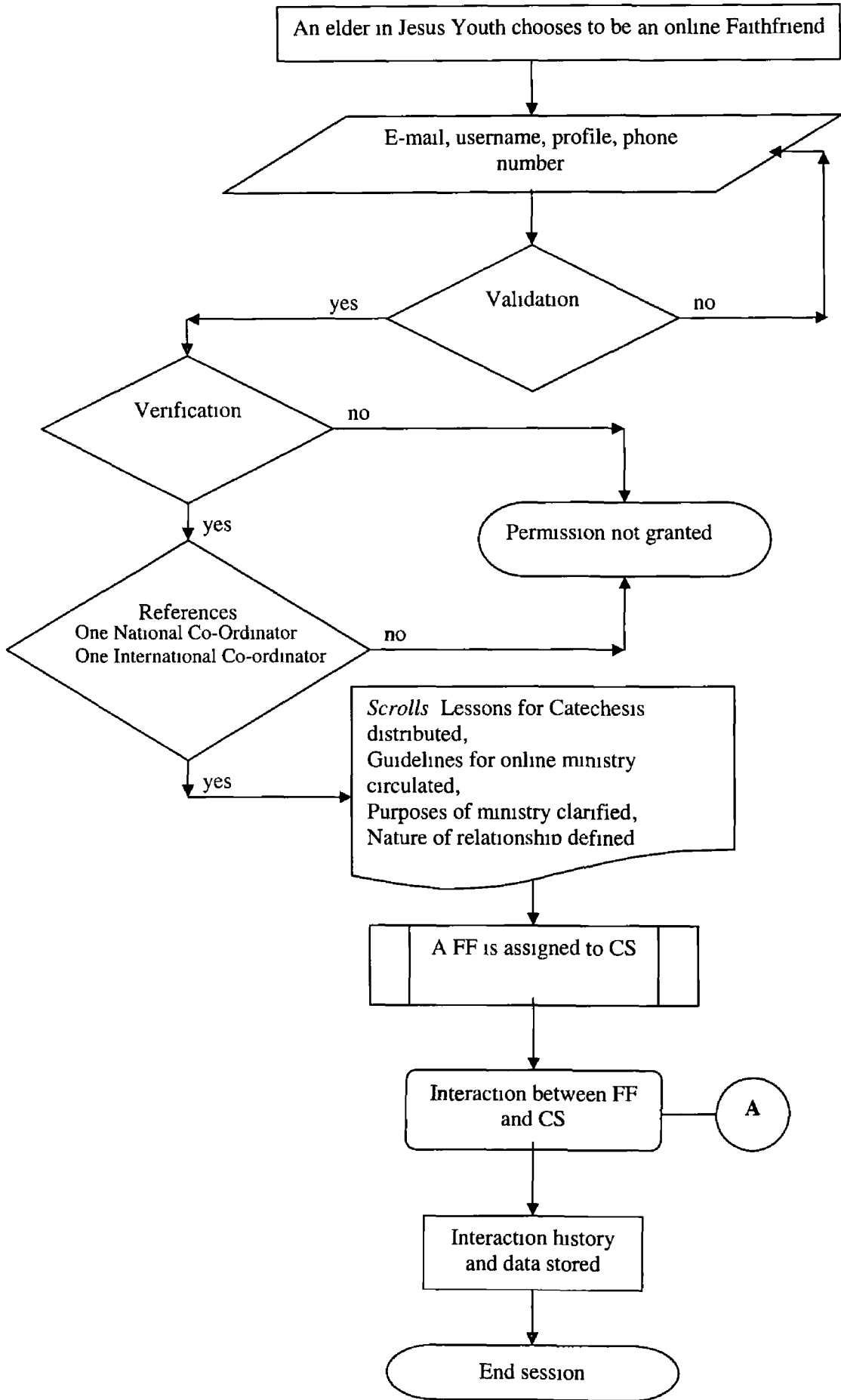
### *Faithfriend*

A Faithfriend (FF) is a person who has a deep grounding in the Catholic faith. He/she is an elder in Jesus Youth or any other relevant youth movement who makes himself/herself available for the faith development of a 'cybersoul' (CS) who would like to deepen his/her faith. A FF has a representative function while guiding the *cybersoul* on his/her faith journey, she/he should exhibit the following qualities

- Love and compassion – as Jesus himself exhibited,
- Dynamism, creativity, youthfulness etc – to represent the Catholic youth movement,
- Understanding and living the teachings, traditions and practices of the Church,
- Be competent in using the Internet

The online presence of a *FF* is charted in Fig 5.1 below

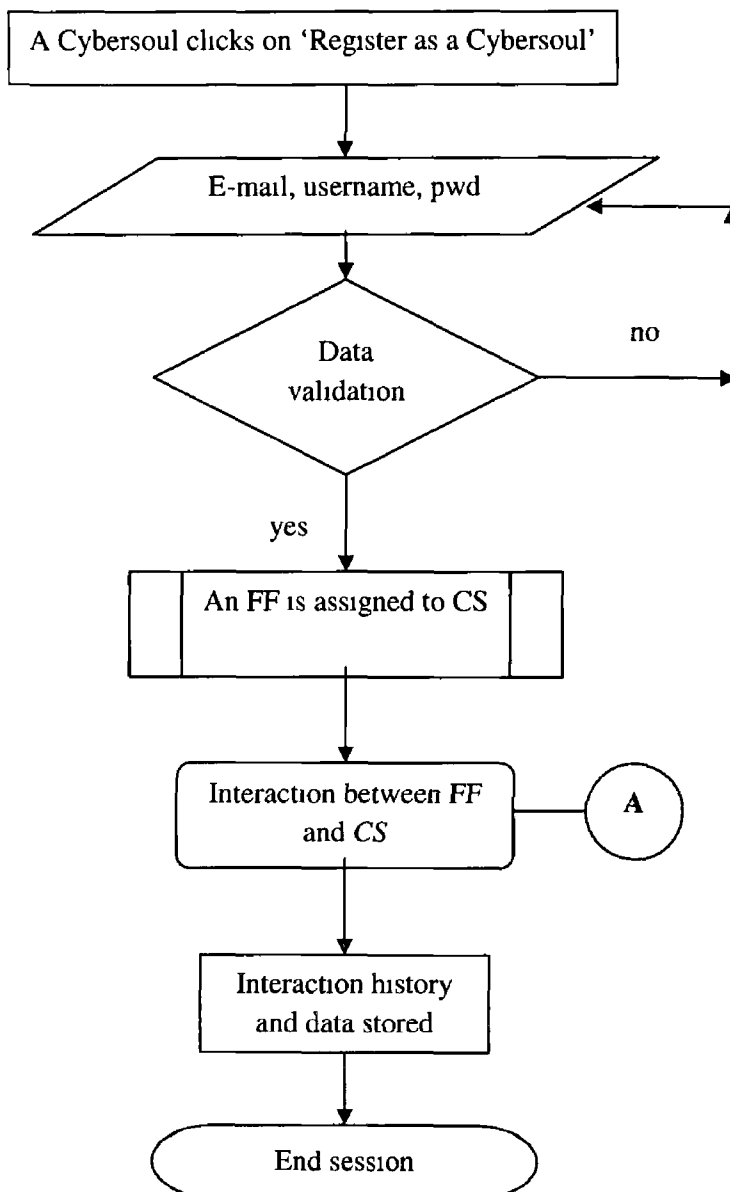
**Fig 5.1 A Jesus Youth Member Chooses to be an Online Faithfriend**



## Cybersoul

'Cybersoul' (CS) is the name given to a young person who wants to deepen his/her faith, using the Internet. A CS may be a person who has spent time in the socialising (hanging out) area of faith or a person who, having been introduced to faith, would like to deepen his/her knowledge. In addition, people with little or no previous knowledge about faith but who would like to join can be facilitated. For a CS, the requirements for registration and login are quite limited when compared to a FF. The following flow chart (Fig 5.2) shows how CSs are given online entry.

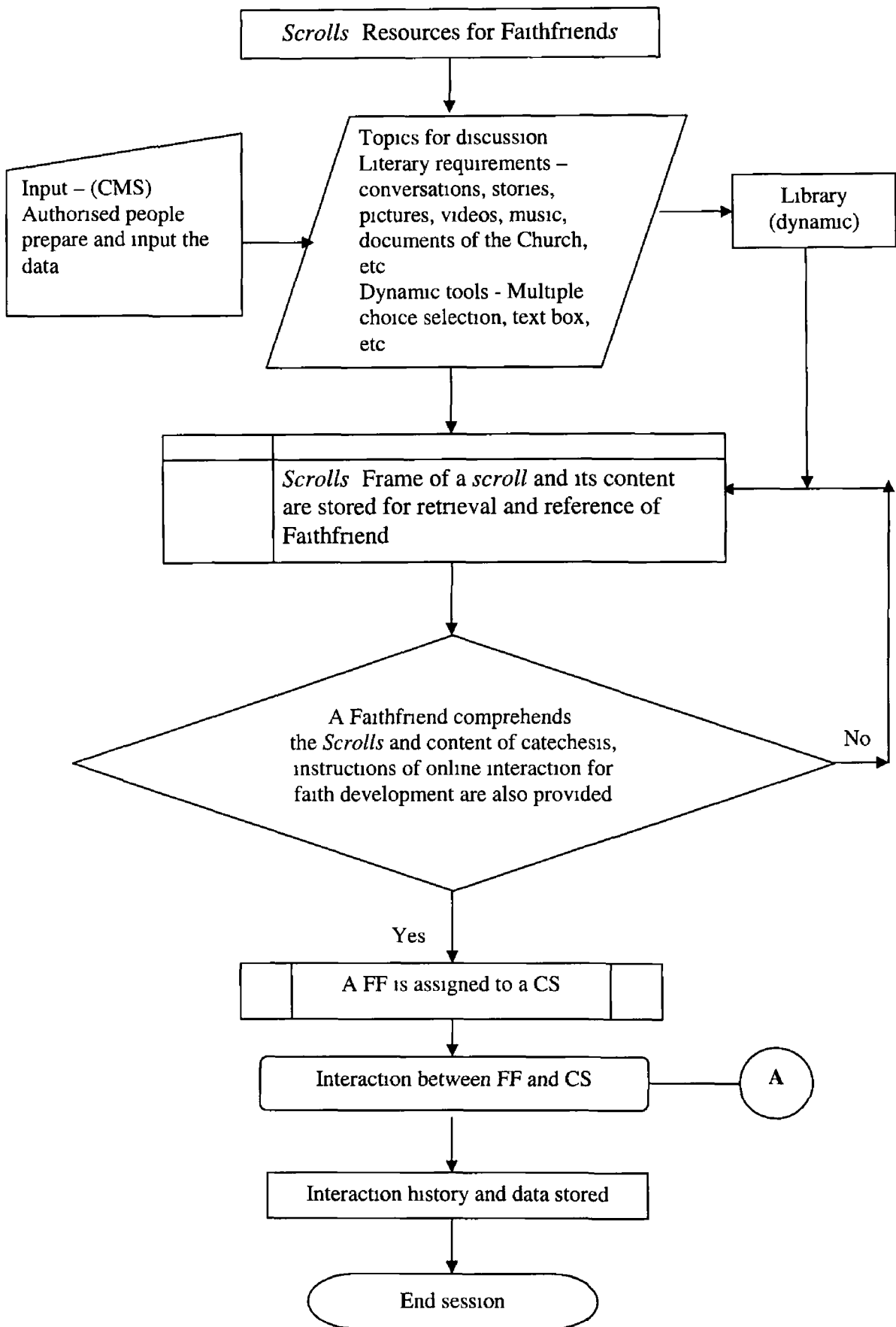
**Fig 5.2 Cybersouls Begin the Registration Process**



## *Scrolls*

In this project the word '*scroll*' denotes all faith development materials prepared to facilitate the interaction between a CS and a FF. The preparation of this online faith development material had to be undertaken prior to the entry of both FFs and CSs. The faith journey of a CS accompanied by a FF draws upon the deposit of faith in the Church over 2000 years, handed down from previous generations and forming a living tradition. The development of *Scrolls*, the online catechetical programme of *www.cybersouls.ie*, is depicted in Fig 5.3 below.

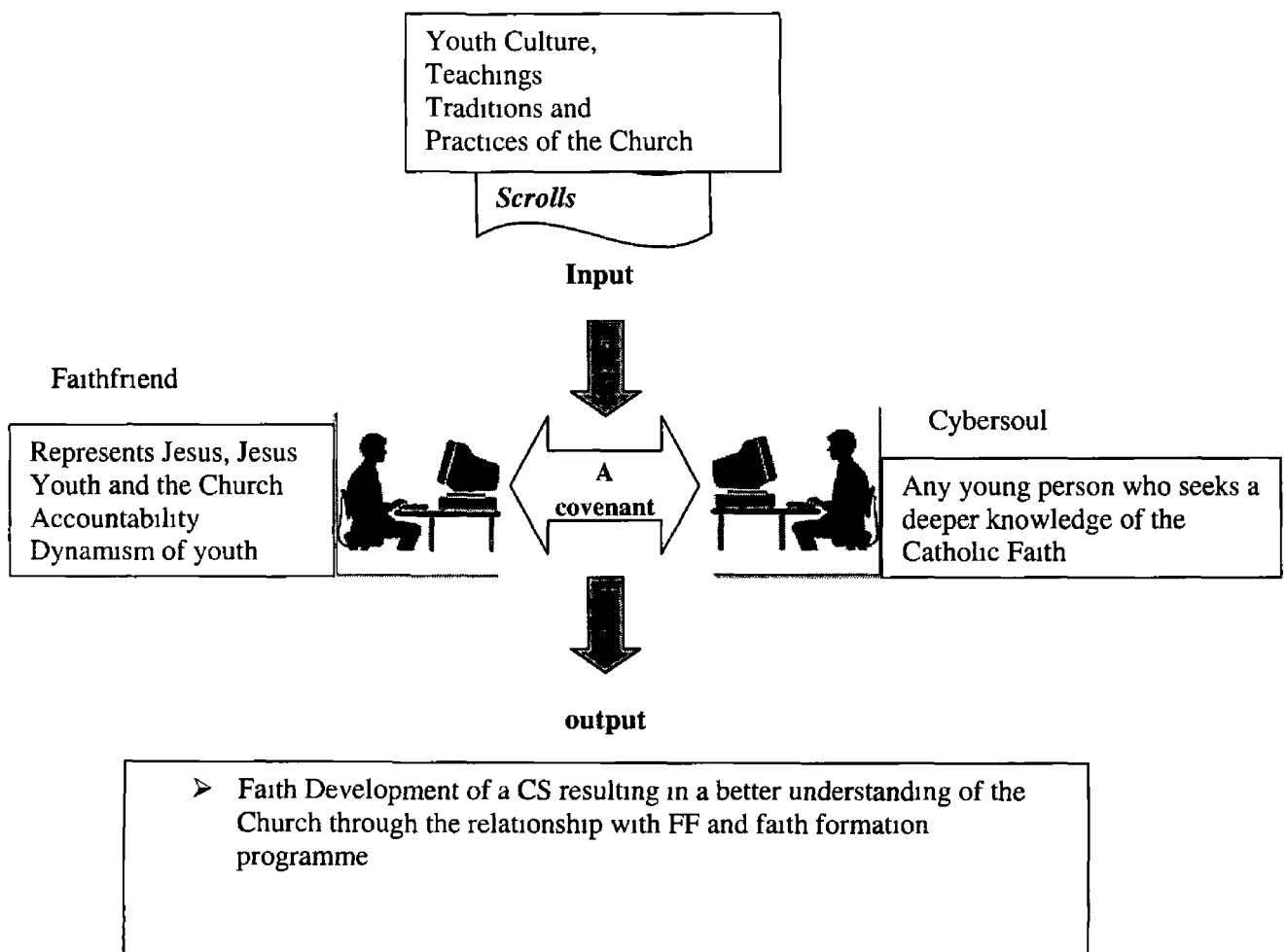
**Fig 5.3 Scrolls (Lessons for Online Catechesis)**



In the above three flowcharts (Fig 5 1, 5 2 and 5 3), the interaction between FFs and CSs, labelled as A, is the process of interaction where the faith development *Scrolls* are shared. This can be considered as an instance of a research case under investigation. The research questions were addressed within the activities of this process. Also, for both FFs and CSs, sharing information about the research project and obtaining their informed consent to participate were required and achieved.

The following diagram (Fig 5 4) gives an integrated overview of the interaction in *www cybersouls ie*.

**Fig 5 4 Interaction between a Cybersoul and Faith Friend**



## ***Development of the Project***

The project co-ordinator, who was also the researcher, conceived the idea of the research project initially in consultation with his research supervisor. The researcher then prepared an initial outline and developed the project further in the light of the literature review presented earlier in the three chapters on evangelisation, communication on the Internet and young people. Detailed specifications, of each module as set out above provided the necessary guidelines for the web developer. Readily available technologies<sup>8</sup> and software were used to develop the website. (The various roles of the co-ordinator and the web administrator are detailed later in the section on implementation.) Before its implementation, the project was piloted to gain a clearer understanding of various elements involved in the project. This process is detailed below.

### **5.2 Piloting of the Project**

This section commences by explaining the particular need for undertaking a pilot run, given that the project is taking place in cyberspace. The attendant challenges of this type of research are described together with the benefits of electronic data retrieval. Finally, an account of the actual piloting of the project is presented.

#### ***The Need for Piloting***

The novel nature of this research gave an added impetus to the need of piloting the project before embarking on the main study. The project was being undertaken in cyberspace, a social situation where young people are invited to use technology to express their own ideas

---

<sup>8</sup> *Technologies & Softwares used* Apache HTTP Server - Web Hosting, HTML, Javascript, XML - for building user interface, PHP – server side programming, MySQL – Database, XAMPP and FILEZILLA as local server and uploading files. All the above commonly used software were made available in the development of the website and were obtained with GNU licence (Free Software Foundation, 2007), freely available online. The web-administrator who singlehandedly coded the site contributed his efforts and time voluntarily to the project.



about faith, reflect on faith practices and apply their new understanding in real life. This is a dialogical process where an invitation-response model applies. At the same time, information is shared between a FF and a CS. The *Scrolls* provide the information on the teachings of the Catholic Church which is shared in such a way that a better understanding about the Church may be formed within the consciousness of young people. Also the presence or the absence of a response from the young person to the invitation of the FF may provide feedback to that FF on which she/he can reflect. Therefore, the challenges associated with this new research accentuated the need for piloting.

### *The Challenges of This Research*

The fact that the project took place in cyberspace differentiates it from other research. The unusual nature of this research is emphasised when similar cases are identified by Gergen and Gergen (2003, p. 599) as a new challenge in case study research. They consider computer communication, in general techno-revolution, as the most significant cultural transformation of contemporary history. In this shift of circumstance, they have made efforts to conceptualise the changes in the whole scenario of research. New research sites are launched because of the invention of Internet communication. Here they observe that not only the effectiveness and the efficiency of reaching out to the population have been changed but also that new ways of conceptualising research methods are evolving.

Another issue related to the innovation of information technology, especially the Internet, is conceptualised by the same researchers as the *impact of meaning making* in the society. In this context, they question the relevance of traditional research methods which depended on the communication technology of the past (Gergen and Gergen, 2003, p. 599). In response to this issue, new ways of qualitative analysis arose, using various software and computer

technologies which are still in the developing stages (Weitzman, 2003, p 310, see also Lazar et al, 2010) Due to its newness, the piloting of the project also looked at different ways of data retrieval

### *Electronic Data Retrieval*

The possibility of storing and archiving the electronic interactions on the Internet makes it an ideal space for facilitating the collection of research data In contrast, in other research, data collection techniques such as questionnaires or interviews are used, with the help of some technology (written, audio etc ) to capture data An advantage in this new medium is that electronic data is more readily available The initial preparatory discussions for this project were carried out online and this electronic data was also archived

As discussed earlier in chapter 3 on online communication, examples of various models of communication, such as transmission, interaction and constructivist models, can be identified The model implemented in this project adopted an interactive approach with a constructivist objective, rather than a linear approach where mere transmission of messages occurs Another unusual feature of this model is that it incorporated a dimension of personal accompaniment which, compared to other models available online, can be seen as a unique factor in this research Effective ways of online accompaniment were also tested during the piloting phase

Piloting led to some changes in the design and approaches The first pilot version of the website allowed for the registration of participants, validation and authentication modules, data entry forms, interactive materials, instructions, personal representation pages, monitoring of interactivity and data retrieval facilities These various elements tested during the piloting phase are set out in Fig 5 5 below

<b>Fig 5.5 Online Activities Involved in the Project</b>	
<i>Developing Instructional Faith Development Materials</i>	<p><b>Writing themes</b></p> <p><b>Spirit</b> Interactive – questions, answers</p> <p><b>Resources</b> Teachings of the Church – Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), Bible, Jesus Youth charism, youth culture</p> <p><b>Uploading online using an editor</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation</b> content, methods of interaction, effectiveness, appeal to young people, A theological advisor approved the themes</p>
<i>Identifying Faith Friends</i>	<p>A Team of at least 10 JY leaders</p> <p><b>Qualifying terms</b> Experience in JY, good credentials, knowledge in mentoring, familiarity with the teachings of the Church, thorough understanding of themes of <i>Cybersouls</i> and its purposes, knowledge of netiquette, recommended by the required JY Co-ordinators</p>
<i>Setting up the Site</i>	<p><b>Designing and customisation to ensure the following</b></p> <p>Themes that interest young people,  Encouraging interaction and empowerment,  Facility to develop themes and making them available to view,  Opportunity for frequent evaluation of the site and interactions,  Making sure that all trajectories of interactions are traced,  Saving the messages shared,  Having the whole corpus of data from the discussions on preparations to the online interactions stored and made available to the researcher</p>
<i>Information and invitation</i>	<p><b>Techniques for promotion</b></p> <p>Electronic - E-mail, mam page Jesus Youth website, within the module of social networking,  JY retreats,  Prayer meetings</p>
<i>Research design and data analysis</i>	<p><b>Identifying the problem</b> Online Evangelisation of Youth</p> <p><b>Identifying the possible solution</b> Accompaniment by Faithfriends</p> <p><b>Identifying the systems involved</b> The Church, the Internet, young people</p> <p><b>Identifying the groups of people involved</b> Faithfriends, young people, web team, theme builders, concept discussion groups and the researcher</p> <p><b>Implementing the solution</b> In the preparatory discussions, in the language and text of the design, in the literature review, in the implementation of the design,</p> <p><b>Data retrieval</b> Documentation of all data, Data collection, Applying the research methodology, Data Analysis, Report of the Findings, Application of the findings</p>

### ***Online Piloting of the Project***

In order to pilot the project, the researcher identified five potential FFs and ten potential CSs belonging to the Jesus Youth movement who were from Ireland and so within the reach of the researcher. The FFs were allowed to register by clicking on the home page in the same

interface given to the CSs. Later, when the data entered were verified, they were promoted to the level of FFs. The piloting process highlighted some practical issues regarding the registration of Faithfriends which were rectified immediately. They were given a separate and private link to register and the amount of data collected from them differed from those of CSs since they had to be verified as authentic. This piloting phase helped to develop clearer norms of identifying and choosing a FF as described below.

#### *Norms of Identifying and Choosing a Faithfriend (FF)*

All FFs had to be practising Catholics. It was crucial that they were able to interact with young people, to speak their language and understand them. As stated previously, a knowledge of the Internet and computers was another pre-requisite for FFs. Moreover, a confidence to accompany a young person online on his/her journey of faith was important. Again, as mentioned earlier, co-ordinators in Jesus Youth, an international Catholic youth movement, undertook the task of identifying FFs who met the above requirements nominating them to the co-ordinator.

Once a FF was identified, the co-ordinator contacted that person and obtained his/her consent. Then an invitation was sent to that FF online to register on the site. Once registered, the co-ordinator confirmed the details and authorised each candidate to act as a FF. The acceptance of a person as a FF was not automatic. This authorisation to become a FF ensured that the person was authentic and avoided the possibility of inappropriate people acting in this role.

An induction process for authorised FFs followed. As it is possible to create tester accounts, in this project the accounts Cstester1 to Cstester50 were created in order to simulate a CS.

being allocated to a FF. Initially, the co-ordinator simulated the role of a CS. Then, once the FF was comfortable using the site and was ready to accompany a CS, a real person who wanted to deepen the journey of faith was allocated to him/her. Initial identification, consent, recommendation, authentication and induction were involved in the preparation of each FF.

Piloting also shed light on the versatility of interactivity in relation to a *scroll*. Provision was given by the editor of the *scroll* to include dynamic snippets of comment buttons and other tools to enhance interactivity in a dynamic manner.

### **5.3 Research Ethics**

Another task which had to be completed before implementation was to obtain the approval of the research ethics committee for the study. As part of this process, a Plain Language Statement was prepared to inform the participants about the research and their involvement in it. An Informed Consent Form was also set up to obtain the consent of each participant taking part in the research. Both of these were included in the *Cybersouls* portal. As the project involved human participation, an application detailing these preparations was sent to the Research Ethics Committee of Mater Dei Institute of Education where this research was undertaken. After thorough examination, the project was approved as it met the required ethical standards.

### **5.4 Implementation of the Project**

Incorporating the modifications identified through piloting and in line with the project specifications, the website *www.cybersouls.ie* was launched on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2010. (Screen shots of some pages of the website are provided in Appendix A, B, C and D.) Prior to the launch, ten FFs had been identified, mainly from Jesus Youth. A contact list was prepared and an e-

mail was sent to some young adults on this list, inviting them to join. A facebook page was set up and, after 50 days, a daily registration rate of at least one new CS was reached. This level of registration was deemed to be sufficient for the purpose of the research as by 100 days the number of CS was expected to reach 100. The collaborative participation of all parties involved, leading up to the launch of the website, clarified various elements to be considered in the implementation of the project. As the processes involved in the implementation were ongoing, they were subject to regular review. The activities involved in the implementation process are identified below.

### ***A Collaborative Implementation***

The participants in the *Cybersouls* project were grouped into three categories: Administrative Level, Faithfriends Level and Cybersouls Level. The scope of participants at the various levels varied according to their roles and tasks, as explained below.

#### ***Administrative Level***

The co-ordinator of the project, the web-administrator and the author of themes constituted the team responsible for the administration of the total project. The researcher undertook the roles of co-ordinator and author of the *Scrolls*. A senior academic in Roman Catholic Religious Education in Ireland and author of catechetical publications, Dr Patrick Devitt of Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University, approved the *Scrolls* before the co-ordinator uploaded them onto the website.

**Role of the co-ordinator** As previously mentioned, the researcher assumed the role of the co-ordinator. In addition to undertaking the steps involved in initiating the project, his other responsibilities as co-ordinator involved

- 1 Developing the specifications of the project,
- 2 Formulating the initial design of the outline of the project and time line,
- 3 Decision making in relation to aspects such as graphics, colour, language, vocabulary, layout and flow of control within the actual operations of the web-project,
- 4 Regular communication with the web-administrator,
- 5 Identification of future FFs and CSs,
- 6 Initial pilot run of the project before the actual launch,
- 7 Creation of various catechetical materials (*Scrolls*),
- 8 Obtaining approval for the *Scrolls*,
- 9 Registration and authentication of FFs,
- 10 Induction of FFs by allocating tester CSs,
- 11 Publicity of the website, inviting CSs to register,
- 12 Allocation of a FF to each registered CS,
- 13 Monitoring the interactions for any fraudulent/inappropriate behaviour etc

Most of the above responsibilities were ongoing during the design, development, piloting and implementation of the project

**Role of web-administrator** The Web-administrator of the project was a professional systems analyst. During an initial discussion in which the co-ordinator shared the concept with him, he indicated that the proposed project was feasible. His roles involved

- 1 Undertaking a feasibility study of various modules in the project,
- 2 Identifying the software and hardware requirements,
- 3 Registration of name and web-space for the project,
- 4 Actual coding,

- 5 Carrying out a dry run of the project with dummy data,
- 6 Modification of the modules after the dry run etc

### *Faithfriends Level*

Faithfriends (FFs) are those who are directly in contact with the project administrators. The project was initially introduced to them through the Jesus Youth movement when its co-ordinators in various countries sent a list of proposed FFs to the co-ordinator. The responsibilities of a Faithfriend involved

- 1 Registration with reference to the local co-ordinator of the movement who authorises a FF,
- 2 Activation of the account via his/her e-mail,
- 3 Undergoing an induction into the site,
- 4 Initiating the accompaniment of CSs as and when it is felt he/she is ready for such an interaction,
- 5 Making use of various modules in the site for faith enrichment, especially *Scrolls*
- 6 Reporting any issues relating to the site or to communication between a CS and a FF to the co-ordinator

Faithfriends were informed that they might need to accompany as many as five active CSs on the *Cybersouls* website. (A screen shot of the registration form of FFs is provided in Appendix B)

### *Cybersouls Level*

Cybersouls (CS) were those who registered of their own free will with the intention of deepening their Catholic religious faith. For research purposes, as participation in the site was

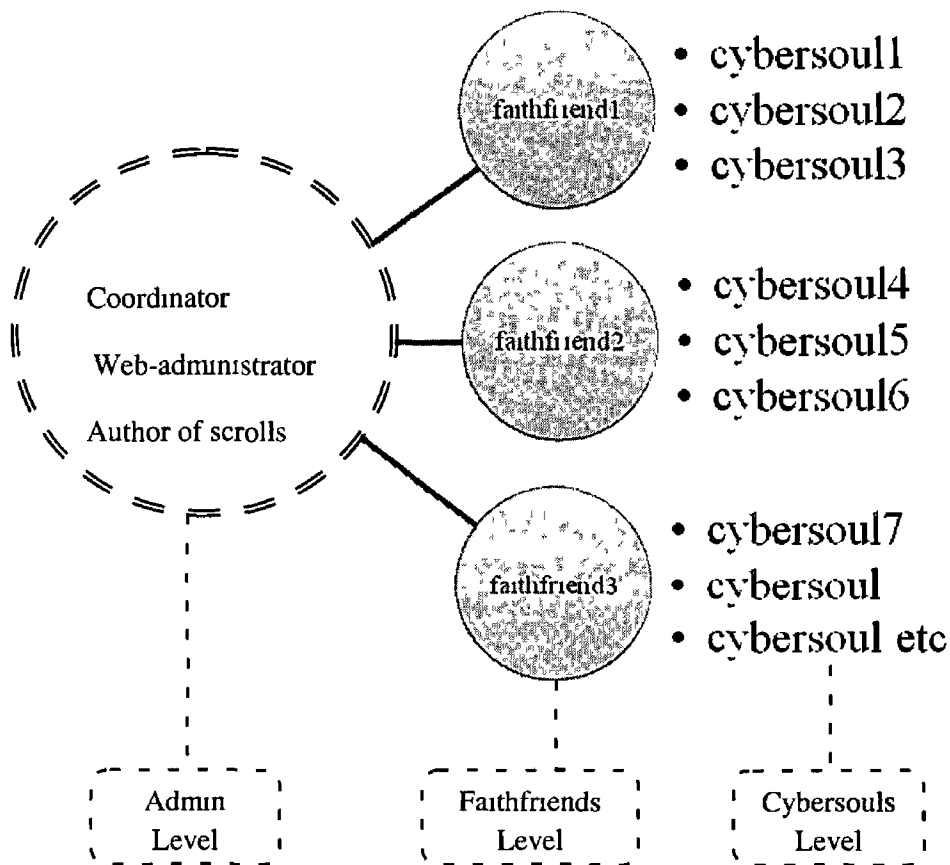


restricted to those over 18, any prospective participants were asked to confirm this age requirement

Once they registered and activated their account using their e-mail, a FF was put in touch with them in the *Cybersouls* website. This gave them an opportunity to send messages to their FF, the co-ordinator as well as the web-administrator

An overall picture of all participants in the *Cybersouls* portal according to their roles and hierarchical levels is set out in Fig 5.6 below

**Fig 5.6 Overall View of the Roles of Participants in the *Cybersouls* Project**



The one-to-one interaction between a CS and a FF was recorded digitally. These online interactions occurred mainly when *Scrolls* were being considered. (Screen shot of a sample scroll is provided in Appendix D.) Also there were additional opportunities for sending

messages between FFs and CSs besides the discussions attached to a *scroll*. All CSs were able to communicate directly with the co-ordinator and web-administrator at any point. It is to be noted that the portal is named after the third level i.e., *Cybersouls* which clarifies the nature of the study primarily as being inductive<sup>9</sup>. The next section sets out various methods used in data collection.

## **5.5 Data Collection and Case Study Selection**

The various methods of data collection undertaken in this study are described below. A mixed methods empirical design was adopted which prioritised a qualitative analytical approach as the primary research technique. The rationale behind choosing a qualitative study is next for consideration.

### ***A Qualitative Approach***

Three conditions are put forward by Yin (2003, p. 5) when identifying which research strategy is to be chosen for a study: (a) the type of research question posed, (b) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events. Accordingly, a case study approach is chosen when a “how” or “why” question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin, 2003, p. 5). The space for online interaction within the *Cybersouls* project is not a tightly controlled setting. The freedom, privacy and power to choose are the same as for anyone who has access to the Net. Online evangelisation is contemporary as it is a relatively new phenomenon. Hence, all the conditions specified by Yin (2003) are relevant to the research project.

---

<sup>9</sup> An inductive approach is adopted in the coding of the data in the analytical process. At the same time the theoretical knowledge acquired in the literature review gives it a deductive dimension. Levins and Silver (2007) suggest the use of a combination of these two approaches as a method of coding when using software.

The case studies under consideration here also have some unusual features. In this research, online communication is the tool being used for evangelisation. Cyberspace is the actual space where this communication takes place. Also, since online communication is mainly multimedia, various components involved in conveying the message are to be considered. Collaborative communication involves incoming and outgoing messages. When mutually interactive communication occurs between a CS and a FF in relation to the message of the Good News, the faith development of a young person may be said to be initiated. Thus a multiple-methods approach or triangulation was adopted since varieties of data, theories and methods were used in order to achieve validity of the results (Berg, 2009). Hence, in this research, a mixed methods approach with a qualitative focus was adopted to maintain the validity of the outcome.

“Contextuality is an aspect of the dynamism and complexity of a case. Case study researchers recognise that cases are shaped by their many contexts – historical, social, political, ideological, organisational, cultural, linguistic, philosophical and so on” (Mabry, 2008, p 217). The research of online evangelisation, based on using the *Cybersouls* project, took place in concrete life situations. It is situated within the new meaning-making systems of technologies of social communication. The next section reports on the process of data collection and the selection of case studies for analysis.

### ***Data Collection***

Data from the *Cybersouls* portal was collected at various times during the project.

- At the time of registration (Screen shots of the registration forms of FFs and CSs are provided in Appendixes B and C ),

- Through the use of a questionnaire sent to CSs at the cut off point of the project<sup>10</sup> (Screen shot of questionnaire form is provided in Appendix F ),
- On an ongoing basis through the interaction between a FF and a CS in the context of a particular *scroll* (Screen shots of an example of interactions in a case are provided in Appendix I )

All data mentioned above were posted on the website digitally Thus it was easy to export the data in a suitable form into the software for analysis The data was collected at different times from different settings in order to facilitate comprehensive data collection Triangulation in data collection<sup>11</sup> was achieved by collecting data from multiple sources As Thurmond (2001) notes

Triangulation is the combination of at least two or more theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, data sources, investigators, or data analysis methods The intent of using triangulation is to decrease, negate, or counterbalance the deficiency of a single strategy, thereby increasing the ability to interpret the findings (p 253)

Lazar et al (2010) also observe that quantitative data can be used as a triangulation tool for corroborating results in relation to case studies

#### *Computer Assisted Database Compilation using NVivo*

The above mentioned data was extracted in table format from the website This was transferred into MSWord format, to be converted into text files for importation into NVivo

---

<sup>10</sup> The data of interaction the participants developed within 100 days from a CS's interaction with a FF was considered for the project The questionnaire was sent on the 100<sup>th</sup> day of the registration of the first Cybersoul  
<sup>11</sup> "The use of multiple data sources to support and interpretation is known as data source triangulation" (Lazar et al, 2010, p 295)

As a computer aided qualitative data analysis system (CAQDAS), NVivo is used globally as an efficient tool for undertaking analytical work (Saldana, 2009) QSR International developed this software (NVivo Training, 2011) NVivo enables the management of multiple sources of data, making it a versatile tool for qualitative analysis (Bazeley, 2007) The range of facilities it offers include coding relevant data in various sizes and organising it in linear or dynamic structures, memoing codes with their contextual information and recalling the data source or codes in line with the research requirements

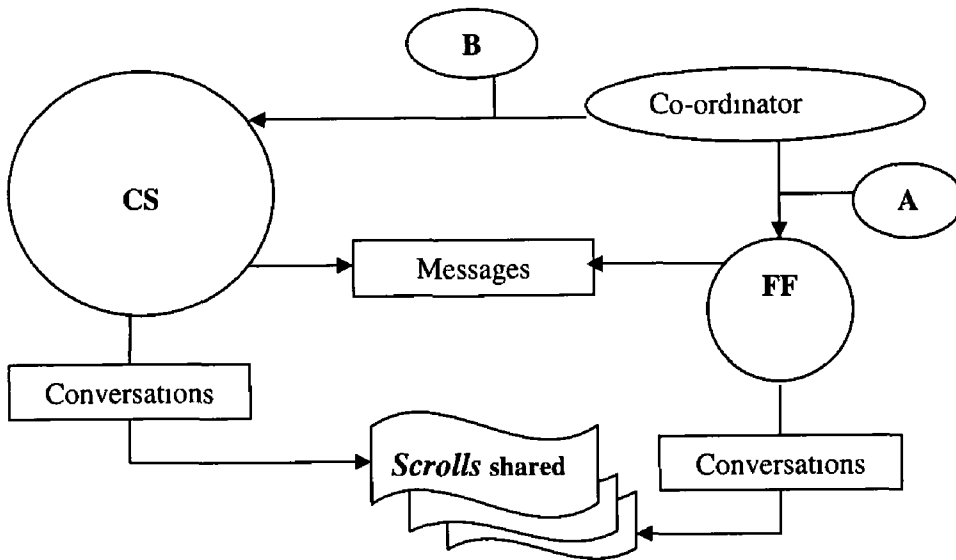
The *Cybersouls* database was designed with the intention of making use of the robust architecture of NVivo This enabled the researcher to extract unforeseen patterns which could arise during the analytical process “NVivo’s sophisticated query tools let you uncover subtle trends and patterns” (QSR International, 2008b, p 3) The scope of collected data is next for discussion

#### Scope of the Data

The data collected for more detailed qualitative analysis relates to the interactions between a CS and a respective FF during the first 100 days following the launch of the site

A drama frame is a way of picturing qualitative data based on the roles, settings, and scripts “The drama frame is well suited for studies concerned with communication as performance” (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p 236) A drama frame of the *Cybersouls* project is presented in Figure 5.7 below illustrating the communication between participants

Fig 5 7 A Drama Frame of Communication in *Cybersouls*



The co-ordinator initiates Task A (see Fig 5 7) This involves both online and real world activities which precede the cyber activities First of all a FF had to be identified This identification was clarified in the earlier section on piloting

In the above Data Frame (Fig 5 7) Task A was comprised of contacting a FF, authenticating each one, giving him/her an initiation into the online interaction by acting as a CS and, finally, being allocated a real person This preceded Task B which is an automatic process when a CS clicks on the button **Register as a Cybersoul** on the home page Certain details were sought to open an account in the *Cybersouls* website *Login Name, E-mail ID, Password, Retype Password, Your Name, Gender, Country of origin, and address and contact (optional)* At this point each one was asked to confirm being over 18 A tick box was provided for anybody who did not wish to take part in the research Also at this stage participants were asked to type in a value from an image to distinguish between computers and humans in order to avoid accounts being created automatically to spam the website (This is technically known as *captcha* (Carnegie Mellon University, 2010)) This was the first data

collection point in relation to an individual CS (A screen shot of the registration form of CSs is provided in Appendix C)

The information collected was kept in the secure custody of the coordinator. He regularly examined the data submitted for any suspected fraudulent information and allocated a FF at the earliest opportunity.

**Data Importation** As this was an online project, the traditional process of transcribing data to adapt them to digital format was not necessary. Demographic details of all participants - both CSs and FFs - were first imported into Excel and then, as attributes of case nodes imported into NVivo. Data were organised into a folder hierarchy by data type (for example, that of FF and CS) so as to track their source. NVivo stores data in 'nodes' which are repositories for themes and categories. One such node type is a case node which is a single file which stores each participant's contribution from any source, be it their fundamental interaction or their individual messaging (Bazeley, 2007).

These case nodes, once populated, were linked to the demographics tables and their returns from the quantitative survey. This facilitated integration between the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the data. Thus, intangibles such as attitude and beliefs (for example, data coded in a node which hosts all references to personal opinion) could be intersected with tangibles such as belongingness to a church for detailed analyses in order to help the researcher understand the phenomena under scrutiny (Lewins and Silver, 2007).

**Coding in NVivo** NVivo helps to code data in a very efficient manner. Autocoding and manual coding are two different methods of singling out data. At a practical level, autocoding

is more appropriate in the first stage of analysis, when the data is to be reviewed from various angles. Manual coding is more suitable in the second stage of the study when grounded theory is applied. This is done later in chapter 7 where a detailed analysis of conversations is carried out. Autocoding was undertaken in the initial data processing stage, as can be seen below.

**Initial Data Processing** Digital data in relation to a total 56 Cybersouls who had completed three or more *Scrolls* by day 100 were obtained from the space of interaction on the website *www.cybersouls.ie*. These were copied into MSWord. The next step was to arrange the data according to the requirements of NVivo8. Compatibility of the data format with NVivo was established in order to increase the speed of data processing and to facilitate autocoding. Various levels of headings were created in MSWord. These are identification marks in NVivo, which help to separate each case. Hence, all labels of *Scrolls* were aligned as 'Heading1', the names of FFs as 'Heading2' and the names of CSs as 'Heading3'. Following this process the autocoding of data to

- Heading 1 separated, coded and ordered data related to all *Scrolls*,
- Heading 2 captured data in connected with a FF,
- and Heading 3 coded and displayed data in relation to a CS

This initial autocoding helped to comprehend the actual size and spread of the data. A huge volume of data was generated, well beyond the scope of this study. This gave rise to the need for careful data reduction. As Berg (2009, p 54) counsels "Qualitative data need to be reduced and transformed in order to make them more readily accessible, understandable and to draw out various themes and patterns". Lazar et al (2010) also point out the need for some



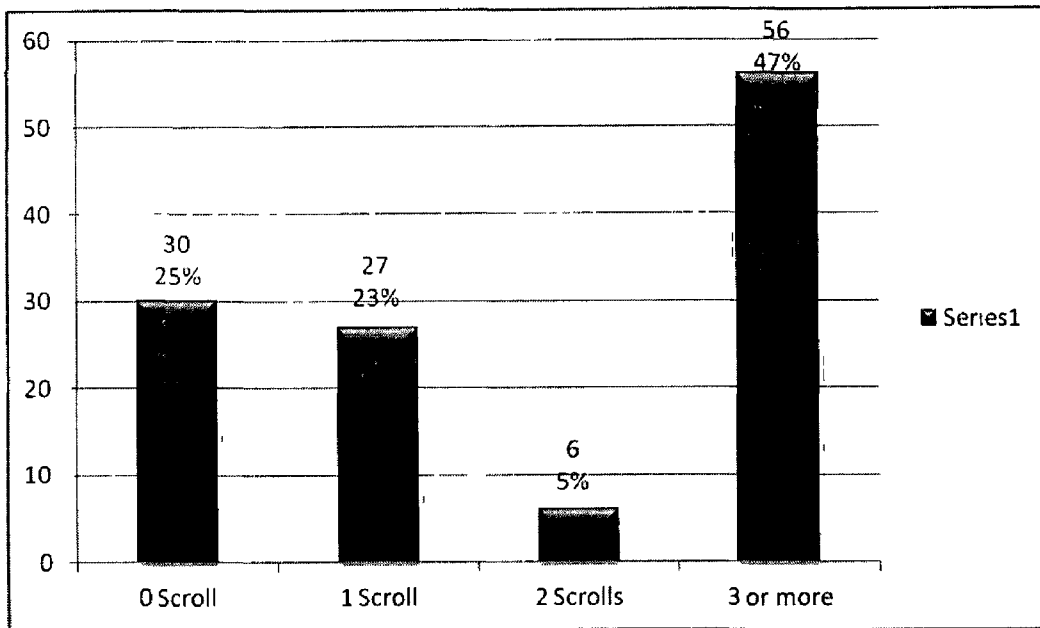
precautionary measures to be taken in relation to data collection when it is being used for research purposes

All of the automated methods for computerised data collection are capable of producing voluminous data sets. This can pose a substantial problem for researchers. It is well known that while filling disks with data is easy, analysis and interpretation of that data is often much harder. Choosing appropriate data granularity and proper data management are crucial components of any automated data collection system (p 308)

### ***Selection of a Representative Sample of Data***

Initially, a self selection method (Lazar et al, 2010) empowered each participant to take part in the research. This was achieved by asking all those who wished to take part in the *Cybersouls* project, while registering, to choose to become part of the research. As mentioned earlier, by day 100 of the site's operation, 119 participants had registered. Of these, 56 CSs (47%) had completed three *Scrolls* or more, six participants had ceased interaction after the second *scroll* and 27 (23%) did not continue after the first *scroll*. Thirty (25%) of those who registered initially did not continue. These results are shown in Fig 5.8 below

**Fig 5.8 Usage of Scrolls by Cybersouls**



The high performance rate of the *Cybersouls* site, with 119 *Cybersouls* registering during the first 100 days of its operation, was very gratifying and generated an enormous amount of data (Screen shots of examples of interactions within a case are provided in Appendix I) However, since this is primarily an exploratory study, using a qualitative approach, data for analysis had to be chosen carefully in order to keep it manageable within the time frame of the study Robust techniques were applied when choosing a representative sample for analysis Firstly, a sample set was created, using the responses to the questionnaire as a basis for selection This is called *Survey Sampling* (Lazar et al, 2010) Another sample set was created based on the data created by the level of usage of the website This is entitled *Usage Sampling* (Lazar et al, 2010) These sampling processes are explained below

#### *Data Reduction by Survey Sampling*

One way of reducing data was to create a subset of participating CSs representative of different sets of favourability This was achieved by investigating if there was an underlying

construct of “favourability” in relation to eight questions on a Likert-type questionnaire sent to CSs. These questions sought information on aspects of favourability towards the *Cybersouls* project. The following Likert items were used:

(CSQ-1) The scrolls/themes in this website helped me to reflect seriously about my faith

(CSQ-2) I like interacting via social networking sites such as Facebook, Bebo, Orkut, Myspace etc

(CSQ-3) I feel part of the online *Cybersouls* community

(CSQ-4) I am closer to my parish/community because of the *Cybersouls* website

(CSQ-5) I understand my Catholic faith better now

(CSQ-6) I would recommend the *Cybersouls* website to a friend in order to deepen his/her faith

(CSQ-7) My Faithfriend in the *Cybersouls* website has helped me to deepen my faith

(CSQ-8) Taking part in the *Cybersouls* project has enlivened my faith

Participants were given a choice of responses: *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree*. In addition, they were offered an opportunity for further comments: *If you have any additional comments to make about the Cybersouls website, kindly make them below*.

The survey was constructed using Google Forms and a web-link was provided on in the *Cybersouls* website (Screen shot of questionnaire form is provided in Appendix F). Participants were given a time frame of two weeks to reply. The survey was made available to the 119 CSs who had registered by day 100 of the site operation and a total of 58 CSs responded, yielding a response rate of just under half (49%).

Since survey data collection was offered in Google Forms, the transfer of the collected data on to an excel spreadsheet was easily achieved. The data obtained from this survey were mainly used for two purposes

- (a) To obtain a general picture of participants' views on the website (These findings are presented in chapter 6 ),
- (b) To obtain a reliable sample set

The creation of the sample set for qualitative analysis is detailed below

**Constructing a Reliable Scale of Favourability** Pallant (2001) points out that it is important to check the reliability of a scale defined as a set of items with high levels of correlation indicative of an underlying construct. A method of assuring reliability is to examine whether the data from individual scale items are internally consistent, i.e., if they all measure the same underlying construct favourability. Cronbach's (1951) alpha coefficient is a commonly used indicator of such internal consistency. It is used for scores which fall along a continuum (Siegle, 2003). First, a Cronbach's alpha test was undertaken which included all the eight items in the questionnaire listed above.

The data relating to the 58 Cybersouls who had completed the survey were transferred to SPSS. A Cronbach's alpha test was applied to the data obtained on the eight questions from these 58 Cybersouls.

**Table 5.1 Initial Case Processing Summary with 8 Variables**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	57	98.3
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	1	1.7
	Total	58	100.0

<sup>a</sup> List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

As can be seen from Table 5.1 above, one of the items relating to one CS was incomplete. Thus only the valid data from the remaining 57 CS was included in the test for internal consistency.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.720	0.755	8

Conventionally it is accepted that, if the value of Cronbach's alpha is above 0.7, there is a good internal consistency within the survey. In this test, as can be seen in Table 5.2, the coefficient is 0.720 which, though adequate, is at the bare minimum.

	CSQ-1	CSQ-2	CSQ-3	CSQ-4	CSQ-5	CSQ-6	CSQ-7	CSQ-8
CSQ-1	1.000	-.171	.240	.310	.375	.274	.410	.545
CSQ-2	-.171	1.000	-.177	-.053	-.105	-.041	-.160	-.076
CSQ-3	.240	-.177	1.000	.450	.400	.343	.383	.316
CSQ-4	.310	-.053	.450	1.000	.534	.349	.456	.439
CSQ-5	.375	-.105	.400	.534	1.000	.471	.599	.601
CSQ-6	.274	-.041	.343	.349	.471	1.000	.169	.349
CSQ-7	.410	-.160	.383	.456	.599	.169	1.000	.554
CSQ-8	.545	-.076	.316	.439	.601	.349	.554	1.000

Note: Table 5.3 depicts the inter-item correlation matrix for the eight items in the survey. As can be seen, survey item CSQ2 has a negative value, whereas all the other items are in positive correlation to other variables.

It can be seen from the inter-item correlation matrix shown in Table 5.3 above that one particular question does not seem to measure the same construct as the other questions due to the negative values of the correlation. The item in question is CSQ-2 - *I like interacting via social networking sites such as Facebook, Bebo, Orkut, Myspace etc.* The item-total statistics

in Table 5.4 below, with eight preliminary variables, also indicate that a higher alpha value would be obtained if that particular item were deleted

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CSQ-1	21.6316	7.844	.435	.337	.689
CSQ-2	22.0000	9.750	-.156	.064	.826
CSQ-3	21.8246	7.647	.440	.296	.687
CSQ-4	22.4912	6.504	.583	.384	.650
CSQ-5	21.9123	6.867	.681	.571	.635
CSQ-6	21.5088	8.004	.443	.312	.689
CSQ-7	21.9298	7.602	.563	.491	.667
CSQ-8	21.9474	7.194	.640	.516	.648

Accordingly, after deleting the variable represented by question CSQ2, Cronbach's alpha test was applied again to the remaining data collected from 7 questions from the 58 *Cybersouls*. As is evident from Table 5.5 below, this resulted in a reliability value of 0.825 which indicates that there is a strong internal consistency between responses to the seven questions and that a reliable scale underlies the *Cybersouls'* response to these survey items.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.825	.828	7

Then, using these seven questions, a "favourability" score of all CS who participated in the survey was calculated in SPSS and classified into three levels: *Less Favourable*, *Favourable* and *Most Favourable*. Three samples each were chosen from the *Less Favourable* and *Most Favourable* levels while four samples were chosen from the *Favourable* section giving a total of 10 samples. Those who completed a greater number of *Scrolls* were chosen from the *Most Favourable* and *Favourable* categories. In the remaining *Less Favourable* category the three

samples chosen included one who had finished the least number of *Scrolls*, one with a medium level of *scroll* completion and one who had worked through a large number of *Scrolls*. This yielded an overall total of ten CSs for inclusion in the detailed qualitative analysis, using survey sampling.

#### *Usage Sampling*

Reviewing the overall usage of the *Cybersouls* website, the researcher observed that there were some CSs who had not completed the questionnaire but were still continuing to interact on the site. It was considered useful to include data in the sample for detailed analysis which related to some of these CSs. There were 13 participants in this category from which three were chosen for inclusion, based on their usage of *Scrolls*, i.e., one who had finished the highest number of *Scrolls*, one the second highest score and a third with the lowest completion rate.

#### *The Final Sample Selected for Qualitative Analysis*

Combining the ten *Cybersouls* selected from the survey sampling with the additional three identified through usage sampling, gave an overall total of 13 *Cybersouls* chosen for qualitative analysis, as detailed in Table 5.6 below.

Case	Level of favourability	CS	Gender CS	Favourability score	Scrolls finished	FF	Gender FF
1	Less Fav	CSA32	M	16	3	FFA19	M
2	Less Fav	CSA51	M	18	11	FFA21	M
3	Less Fav	CSA19	F	20	5	FFA14	M
4	Favourable	CSA35	M	21	11	FFA4	M
5	Favourable	CSA45	F	21	11	FFA15	M
6	Favourable	CSA52	F	21	7	FFA22	F
7	Favourable	CSA30	M	22	6	FFA6	F
8	More Fav	CSA11	F	23	24	FFA10	F
9	More Fav	CSA46	F	24	21	FFA10	F
10	More Fav	CSA50	M	28	23	FFA1	M
11	Usage	CSA6	F	N/A	5	FFA5	M
12	Usage	CSA9	F	N/A	5	FFA8	F
13	Usage	CSA7	F	N/A	4	FFA6	F
<b>Total</b>		13			136	11	

These 13 cases selected for qualitative analysis provide data relating to the on-going communication which took place between a CS and a FF during the identified number of *Scrolls* they had completed together. There are eight female and five male CSs in this cohort. They interacted with four female and seven male FFs, as two female FFs (FFA10 and FFA6) accompanied two Cybersouls each in Case 8/9 and Case 7/13 respectively.

There are differences between the participants in the selected sample in relation to a range of demographics. Their gender, country of origin, vocational status and knowledge and practice of their faith are some of the factors which may have impacted on the effectiveness of the CSs interventions. Also, there was a wide variation in the completion rate of *Scrolls* which ranged between three and 24. This cohort of 13 CSs, together with the interactions of the 11 FFs who accompanied them, yielded an overall total of 136 *scroll*-based interactions for consideration.



## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter focussed on the *Cybersouls* project. The research questions have been set out and their operationalisation explained. In addition, various elements of the research design were clarified.

The piloting of the project was described, prefaced by a discussion on the need for piloting and the challenges of this research. Also the approval of the research from an ethical perspective was established.

Next, details were given on the collaborative approach used in the implementation of the project.

A description on the data collection process clarified the methods and approaches adopted in this part of the research. Finally, the sampling techniques used to select the cohort of thirteen cases for qualitative analysis were explained. The next chapter considers findings of the questionnaire sent to the CSs and selected case descriptions.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS AND DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED CASES**

This chapter commences with a presentation of the findings arising from the online questionnaire sent to CSs. This is followed by a review of the research questions. Next, having clarified some of the approaches to the analysis of case studies, using NVivo, the focus turns to the cohort of thirteen cases chosen for more detailed analysis, as identified in the previous chapter. The main characteristics of each of these cases are presented and the chapter concludes with a consolidation of these findings.

#### **6.1 Findings Online Questionnaire**

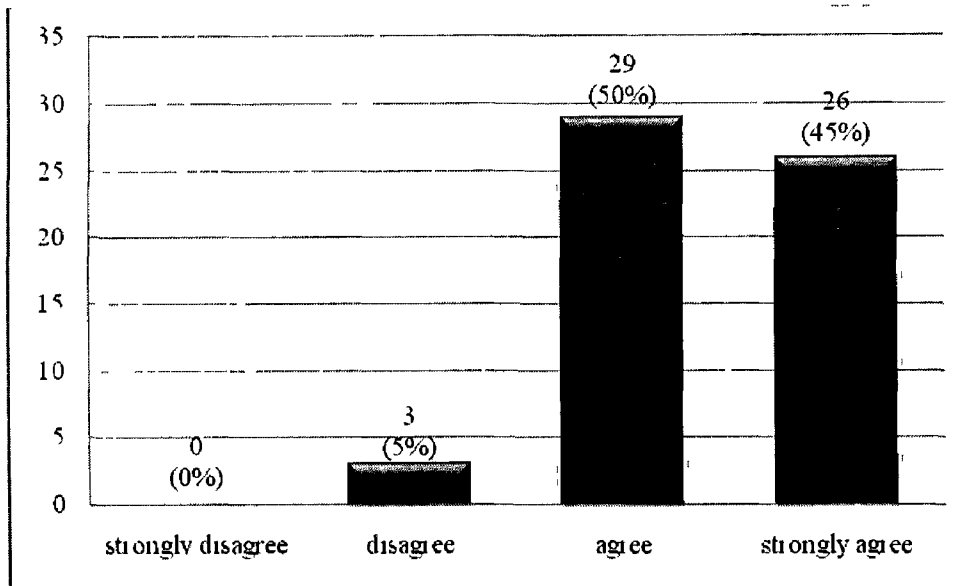
As mentioned in chapter 5, an online questionnaire was sent to the 119 Cybersouls who had registered by day 100 of the site's operation, seeking their views on various aspects of the *Cybersouls* project. The questionnaire had eight specific questions, as listed previously in chapter 5, together with an option to include additional open response comments at the end. A total of 58 Cybersouls responded, giving a response rate of 49%. The findings relating to this questionnaire now follow.

##### ***Question 1 Impact of the Scrolls on Faith***

The impact of the *Scrolls* on the faith of participants was explored in this final closed question. Here, once again, the results were very positive, with 95% (55) of the respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the *Scrolls* had helped them to reflect on their faith. Detailed results are provided in Fig 6.1 which now follows. Also this addresses the research

question What skills and tools would be needed by the Church in adapting to the new medium of the Internet?

**Fig 6 1 The Scrolls/themes in this website helped me to reflect seriously about my faith**

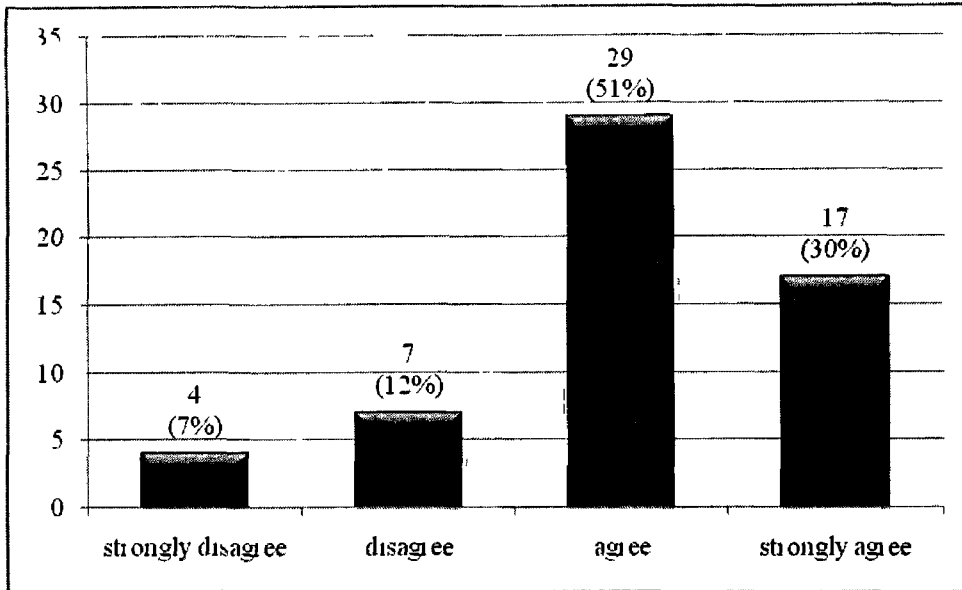


This question concerned one of the main features of the website, namely *Scrolls*. They contain some of the Catholic themes which were later shared by a FF with a CS and the conversation and interaction progressed around them. The use of multimedia, layout, language and a facility to interact were incorporated within a *Scroll*. How these features are synthesised and how they have been utilised by the participants is discussed in detail in chapter 7.

### **Question 2 Social Networking**

This question investigated preferences regarding the usage of other social networking sites

**Fig 6 2 I like interacting via social networking sites such as Facebook, Bebo, Orkut, Myspace etc**

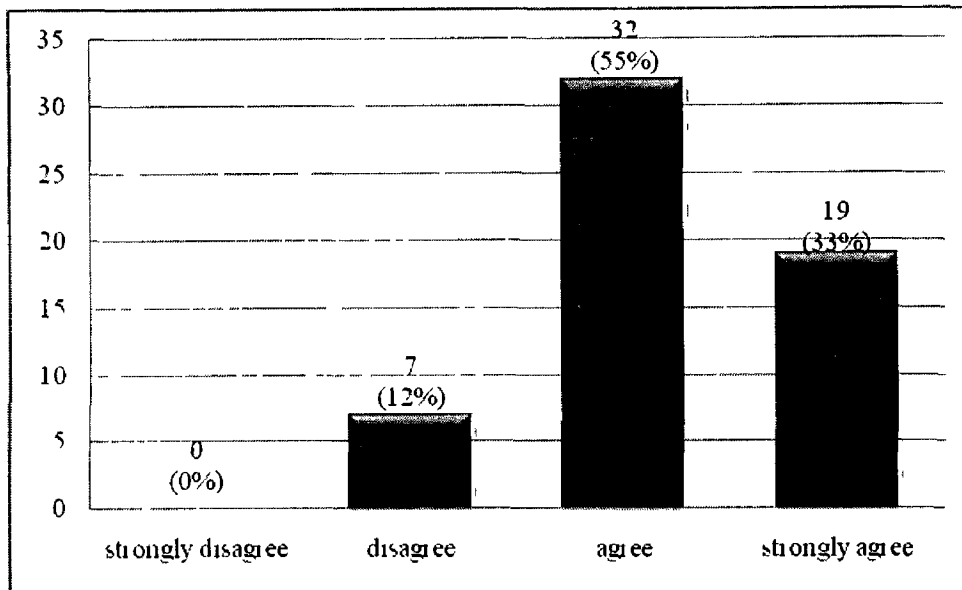


The response, as seen in Fig 6 2 above, shows that the majority of the sample (46/81%) are positively disposed to social networking on the Internet. The remaining eleven (19%) indicated that they did not like to interact by using social networking sites. Given the overall positive disposition to using other social networking sites, it can be concluded that participants are in a position to compare the *Cybersouls* website with other sites. Also this findings is valuable in order to substantiate claims made later in the more detailed analysis.

### ***Question 3 The Online Cybersouls Community***

The communal dimension of the online site was explored in this question. As depicted in Fig 6 3 below, similar to the positive trends in the first four questions, the vast majority of respondents (51/88%) CSs feel part of the online *Cybersouls* community leaving only seven (12%) who disagreed with this statement.

**Fig 6.3 I feel part of the online *Cybersouls* community**



A community feeling can be considered as one of the driving forces of online interaction. The Church being a community, and young people sharing common defining elements, as discussed earlier in the respective chapter 5, this issue is closely connected to the research questions. A response from CSA7 regarding this question is interesting:

I feel like I am part of *Cybersouls*. But I don't have a community feeling. Maybe it's because of the kind of interaction. I only have contact with my faith friend right and so I don't usually have the feeling that there are many people out there along with me. Maybe it's because I don't interact with the other members.  
(Comments from CSA7, Survey in *Cybersouls*, 2010)

At present, the main interaction on the website is between a FF and a CS 1 e , a one-to-one relationship. While this seems to have generated a community feeling for most of the respondents, a more public forum may bring an added dimension to this 'community feeling', given the view expressed by CSA7 above. Various levels of interaction occurring between

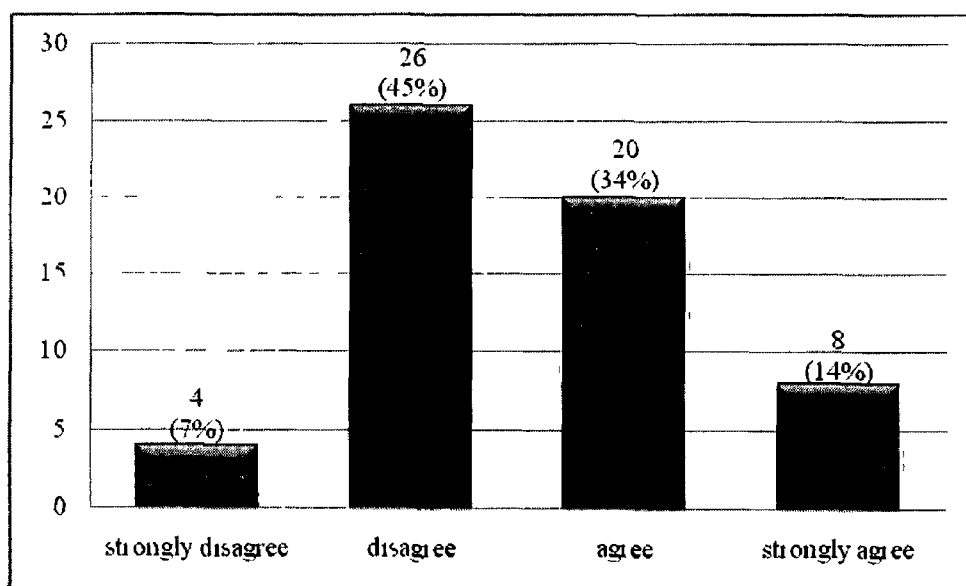
participants, which may define communities in the *Cybersouls* website, are considered later in the detailed analysis

#### ***Question 4 Website Usage and Parish/Community Involvement***

The possibility of involvement in the *Cybersouls* project forging closer links for participants with their parish/community was probed in this question. What are some of the pastoral and theological opportunities afforded by the Internet as a means of evangelisation? This is a research question posed in chapter 5 with a view to finding out how the Internet can be used as a conduit to inspire young people to take part in the real life activities of the Church at parish or community level

Results, shown in Fig 6.4, below, differ from the mainly positive responses reported in relation to the previous four questions. Here, opinions were evenly divided as just over half of the respondents (30/52%) CSs disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they were closer to their parish community because of their involvement with the *Cybersouls* website, leaving 48% who agreed/strongly agreed with the statement

**Fig 6.4 I am closer to my parish/community because of the *Cybersouls* website**



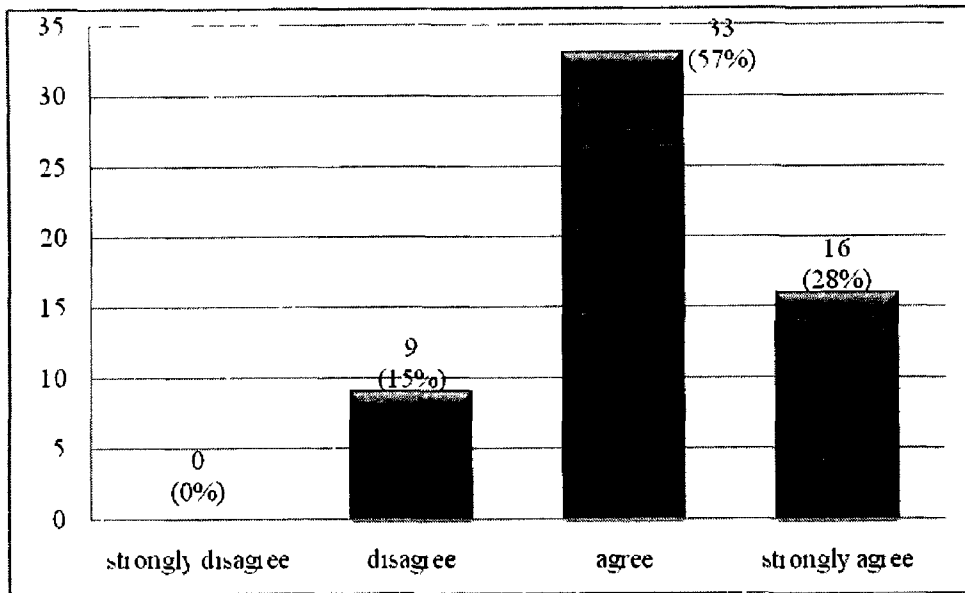
Comments made by some respondents in relation to this question are worth noting. One, who disagreed with the statement, explained “I do not belong to a parish. So I don’t know in what way Cybersouls will help in my parish activities and relations” (Comments from CSA7, Survey in *Cybersouls*, 2010). This raises the issue of alienation of young people, as mentioned in chapter 4, where they seem to be absent from the traditional places of worship (Briggs, 2008). However, taking into account the short time span of this study, the fact that almost half of the participants endorsed the statement can be interpreted as a positive achievement of this web portal.

In addition, some of the interactions and discourses between CSs and FFs, which are detailed later, indicate a more positive attitude to this question.

### ***Question 5 Understanding of Faith***

Catechesis is one of the moments of evangelisation, as detailed in chapter 2. A core objective in setting up the *Cybersouls* website was to provide an online facility enabling young people to get a better understanding of the Catholic Faith through catechesis. Here, Question 5 probed for information on another major research question: ‘considering the moments of evangelisation, to what extent is the Internet useful as a tool?’ The relevant findings are presented in Fig 6.5.

**Fig 6 5 I understand my Catholic faith better now**



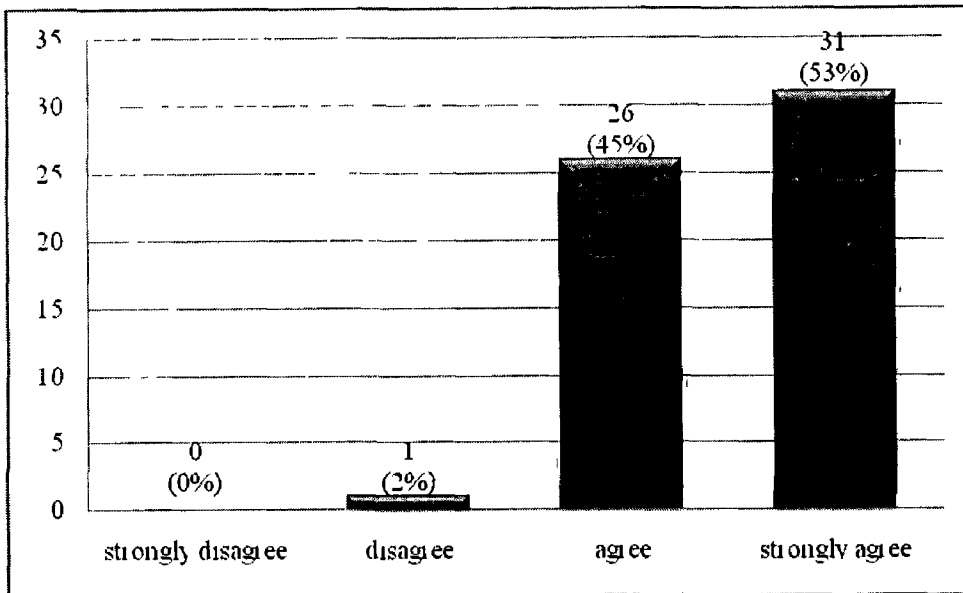
As can be seen from this figure, a significant majority of the sample, (49/85%), either agreed or strongly agreed that the *Cybersouls* website had given them a better understanding of the Catholic faith. It is noted that nobody strongly disagreed with the statement while only nine (15%) disagreed with it. This question is connected to the capacity of the Internet to act as a medium of information-sharing on faith. It addresses the research question 'What is the potential of the Internet as an environment for the evangelisation of young people?' Results suggest that the Internet does have a potential in this regard.

***Question 6 Recommending Cybersouls Site to Others***

The aim of Question 6 was to ascertain how participants felt about recommending the *Cybersouls* site to a friend as a means of deepening faith. As can be seen in Fig 6 6 below, there was almost full endorsement of this idea, with only one respondent voicing dissent. As those who strongly agreed with the proposition (31/53%) outnumbered those who agreed with the proposition (26/45%), this adds more strength to this positive outcome.



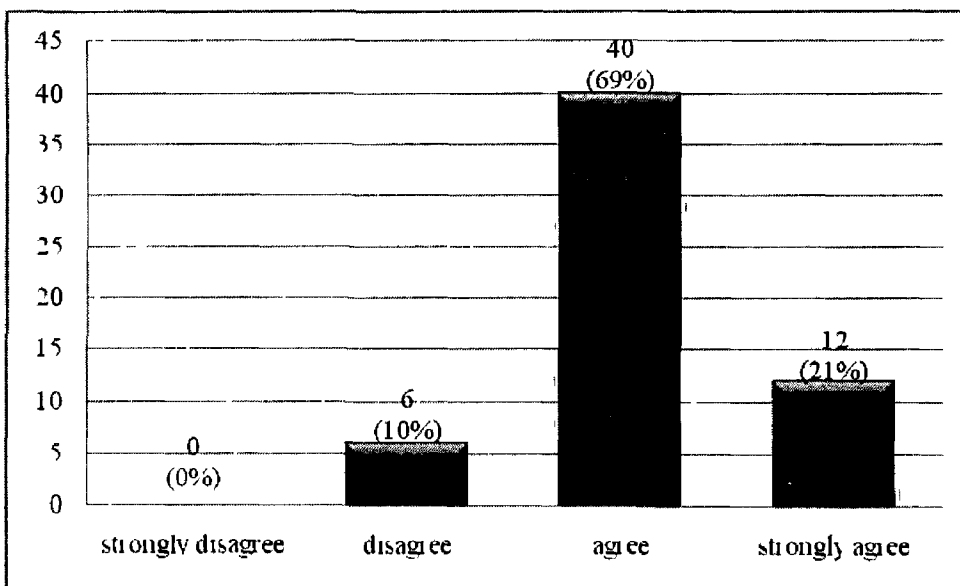
**Fig 6.6 I would recommend the *Cybersouls* website to a friend in order to deepen his/her faith**



**Question 7 Impact of Faithfriend on faith**

FFs were the focus in Question 7 Their effect on the faith of participating CS was investigated Findings are depicted in Fig 6 7

**Fig 6 7 My Faithfriend in the *Cybersouls* website has helped me to deepen my faith**

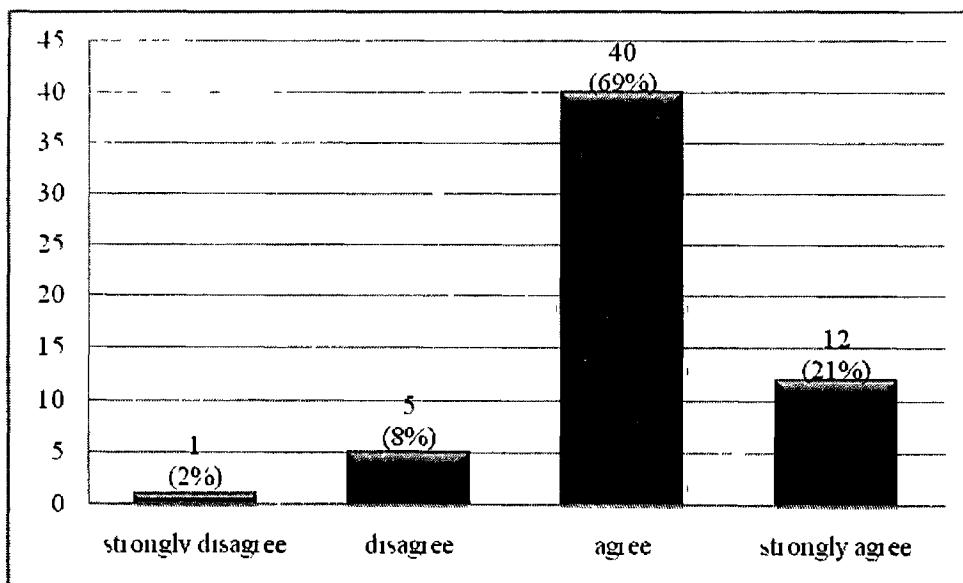


The presence and response of a FF is a way of evangelising youth online. How can the Church make use of technology to reach out to youth in their new habitats or socialising spaces? Question 7 addresses this research question. A total of 22 FFs was allocated to the above 58 CSs who replied to the questionnaire. Some FFs had more than one Cybersoul allocated to them. Considering the differences in personalities, their individual and cultural difference and other factors that varied with each FF, it is noteworthy that, here again, 52 (90%) either agreed or strongly agreed that their FF had helped to deepen their faith. The factors relating to FFs which contributed to this positive outcome are considered later in the more detailed analysis of findings. Offering FFs online may present an opportunity for the Church in this regard. The involvement of FFs is a major element of this research project, making it unique and breaking new ground.

**Question 8 Impact of Cybersouls project on faith**

This question sought to find out from respondents if their participation in the *Cybersouls* project had enlivened their faith. Results are set out in Fig 6.8 below.

**Fig 6.8 Taking part in the *Cybersouls* project has enlivened my faith**

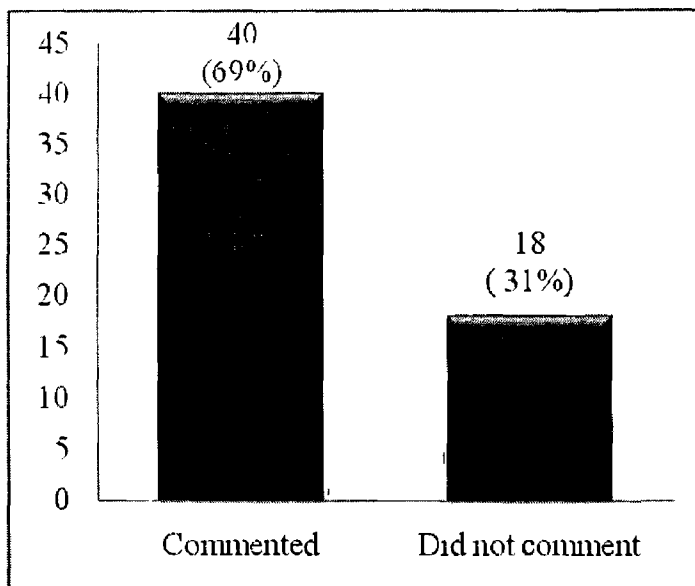


Findings indicate that the project had a positive impact on the faith of participants. A total of 90% (52) of the 58 CS who responded either agreed or strongly agreed that the *Cybersouls* project has enlivened their faith. This overall positive response suggests that the objective of deepening their faith has been a reality for the majority of respondents, providing information related to the primary research question of examining how the Internet can be used for the evangelisation of youth online.

### ***Question 9 Additional Comments***

The final question (9) was an open question which sought additional comments from CSs about the website. The response rate is set out in Fig 6.9 below.

**Fig 6.9 Additional Comments**



As can be seen, 40 (69%) availed of the opportunity to make general observations on this online project. An analysis of the responses now follows. As some of the comments covered more than one issue, the total number (56) exceeded the number of respondents (40). The analysis enabled the comments received to be grouped into six areas – (a) general views on

the website, (b) compliments on the site, (c) appraisal of FFs and (d) *Scrolls*, (e) specific aspects of the site which were of interest and finally (f) some suggestions

The majority of the comments, 28 in total, were in Group (a) and they were all positive. Fifteen of them expressed general satisfaction with the site, e.g., “a brilliant concept” (CSA30), “a very good website” (CSA44), “it’s been a great help to me” (CSA42). A further five respondents specified the usefulness of the site for young people. A comment by CSA43 captures this aspect rather well: “It is good for the new generation – is like serving the old fine wine in a newly fashionable mug”. Of the remaining eight comments, three (CSA13, CSA33 and CSA53) related to the spiritual nourishment provided by the site, two (CSA26 and CSA28) said, “it helped me to think about my faith” and another duo (CSA20 and CSA52) commented on how well organised the site was. The remaining comment (CSA50) was that “*Cybersouls* should replace facebook”!

Turning to Group (b), the eight comments here expressed congratulations/thanks to the researcher for setting up the site, e.g., “Thank you very much for creating such a wonderful resource” (CSA11).

FFs were the focus in Group (c). All five comments here were positive, endorsing the help and support provided by Faithfriend, e.g., “Faithfriends are very helpful” (CSA18), “My Faithfriend has been a huge moral support to me” (CSA26).

While only four comments related specially to the *Scrolls* (Group (d)), they all expressed reservations about them, e.g., “I think the *Scrolls* are a little bit complicated” (CSA34), “*Scrolls* may not be easy for an average user to understand” (CSA37).

In Group (e), three respondents identified particular aspects of the site which appealed to them, e.g., “the dialogue sessions” (CSA30), “connecting with another practicing Catholic” (CSA39)

The final Group (f) consisted of eight suggestions. Two of them advised making the site more popular and better promoted (CSA35 and CSA27). A third respondent, CSA19, suggested that the site needed to be a bit clearer and easier to navigate, while CSA37 considered that it should be “optimised for mobile devices”. The remaining four put forward suggestions regarding possible changes to the site. These included recommendations about books/movies/videos/web sites based on a catholic point of view (CSA35), having discussion forums for members on faith related subjects (CSA40), adding an FAQ section (CSA37) and giving some topics for reflection and then asking for feedback (CSA38)

This concludes the review of the comments received in response to the invitations in Question 9 of the questionnaire. Findings indicate an overall positive response to the *Cybersouls* website including the critical and creative suggestions, apart from the reservations about the *Scrolls* recorded by four participants.

### ***Questionnaire Overview***

All 58 *Cybersouls* who responded to the questionnaire indicated a generally positive attitude towards the *Cybersouls* website, apart from the response to one question (Q 4). The above findings capture their attitudes towards two main features:

(1) In relation to the various components of the *Cybersouls* website

The majority of respondents seem to be positively disposed to all questions related to the various components of the site, having made use of them. Regarding FFs and *Scrolls*, their

attitude is generally very positive. The structure of the website and other issues raised by certain CSs are considered later in the more detailed analysis.

(2) In relation to the effects of the site on their personal and community life

Some of the CSs commented that the *Cybersouls* website had helped them in a general way in their personal life and in their relationship with God. At the same time, just over half of the respondents indicated that the site had not increased their affinity to a parish or community. A comment from one participant is interesting in this regard: "I feel that it is too early for me to answer the questions" (Comments from CSA22, Survey in *Cybersouls*, 2010).

It is considered that the running of the website for a longer period and further post-doctoral research at a later stage, following the completion of this pioneering project, may provide additional insights over time. As mentioned in chapter 5, since a regular review of the research questions can bring greater clarity to the study, this task is now undertaken.

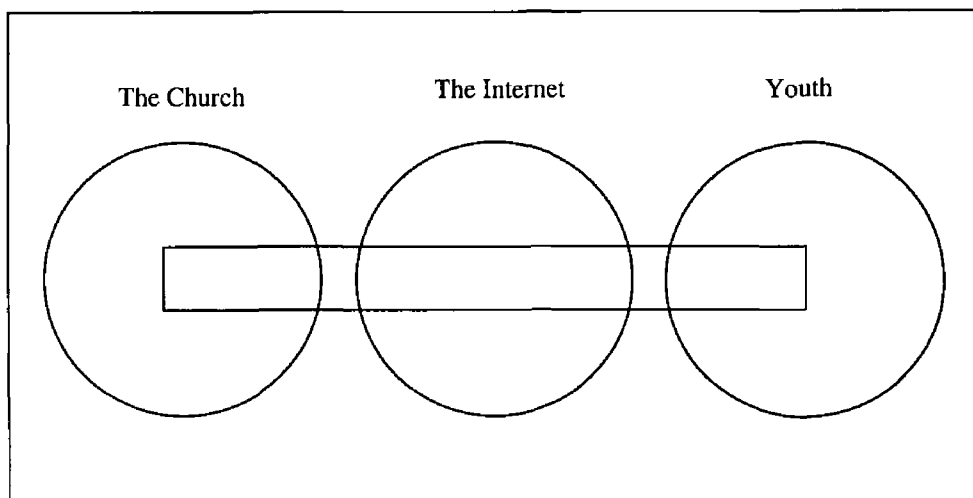
## **6.2 Review of Research Questions**

All the research questions set out in chapter 5 emanate from the main research question exploring how an effective web presence can be developed which can help value-based communities such as the Catholic Church to relate to young people at a global level. The research questions can be clustered under three main areas: the Church, the Internet and Young People.

The possibility of the convergence of these three spheres at a given time is at the core of this thesis. This synthesis can occur in various ways, depending on the levels of interaction and their mutual benefit. There are three linear ways for this interaction to take place. An example

of a linear model is given in Fig 6 10 In this configuration, *the Internet* is just a medium benefiting the interaction between the Church and young people Here, young people, as well as the Church, may be using the Internet as a medium for their own private communication

**Fig 6 10 Linear Merge of the Three Spheres**

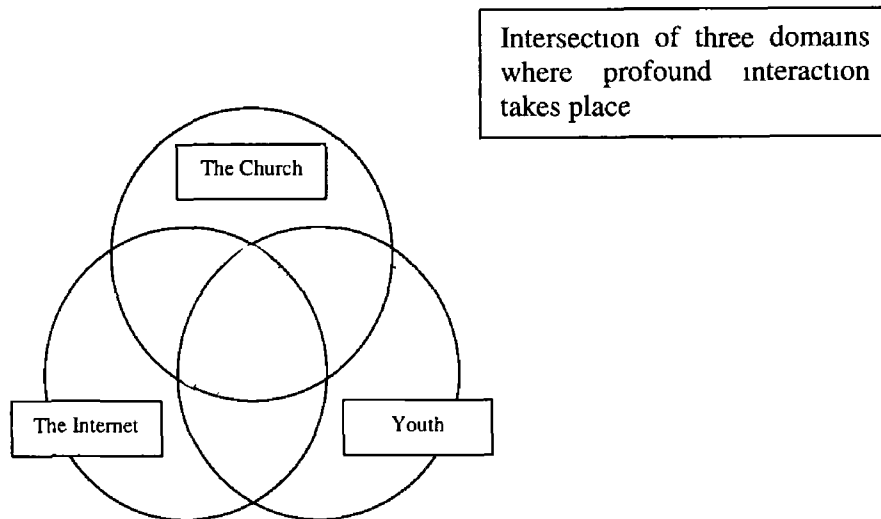


In the second linear model, *youth* replaces the Internet at the centre In this situation, the Church may be using the energy of young people for its growth from *one side* while the Internet may be catering for the needs of young people from the other side But neither may contribute to the development of young people in the long run

In the third linear interaction of these three spheres, *the Church* is positioned at the centre Young people may be interacting with the Church for their immediate and temporal benefits The Internet may be targeting the traffic of the Church for its own benefit, while not giving anything in return to the Church

The ideal situation is to have a dynamic synthesis of these three spheres where each one can benefit from the presence of the other two, as shown in Fig 6 11

**Fig 6 11 Dynamic Merge of Three Spheres**



*Research Questions Pertaining to Various Spheres of the Research*

**The Church**

- (a) How can the Church make use of technology to *reach out* to the youth in their new habitats or socializing spaces?
- (b) What skills and tools would be needed by the Church in adapting to the new medium of the Internet?
- (c) Considering the various 'moments of evangelisation' developed over the years in the Church, to what extent is the Internet useful as a tool to continue this task?

**The Internet**

- (d) What is the potential of the Internet as an environment for the evangelisation of young people?
- (e) How can the Internet empower young people as active participants in evangelisation using the Internet?
- (f) What are some of the pastoral and theological opportunities afforded by the Internet as a means of evangelisation?

**Youth**

- (g) How can the freedom and digital ingenuity of a young person be a source of momentum for New Evangelisation?
- (h) How can the information shared online influence the consciousness of young people to inform their understanding about faith?

**Convergence of these Spheres**

- (i) The Internet provides the tools, the Church provides the atmosphere and young people are the participants. How can these seemingly distant cultural spaces be mutually inculturated?



Evangelisation can come about at the centre where the union of these three spheres occurs. This gives rise to some questions: Can the Church and the Internet be kept on the same plane of interaction? Can the world of youth fall on the same plane as that of the Church and the Internet, as depicted in Fig 6.11? The quality of communication on the Internet and the sacramental nature of the Church are issues which arise here in impacting on this dynamic of the three spheres. In general, it may be considered that the Church stands for the Divine, youth represents humanity and the Internet models the Universe. This alliance holds immense possibilities for the future of humanity.

The Church has so much to talk about with youth, and youth have so much to share with the Church. This mutual dialogue, by taking place with great cordiality, clarity and courage, will provide a favourable setting for the meeting and exchange between generations, and will be a source of richness and youthfulness for the Church and civil society (John Paul II, 1988, para. 46)

The *Cybersouls* research project attempted to bring together these three spheres, offering a favourable setting for this mutual dialogue, as envisioned by Pope John Paul II, providing a source of richness and youthfulness for the Church and civil society. The research questions are fundamentally connected to the above three spheres and their convergence, as set out in Figure 6.10. The detailed analysis investigates if the above spheres intersected in the *Cybersouls* project.

### **6.3 Case Studies using NVivo**

Before embarking on the details of the selected case studies, some pertinent issues regarding the case study method are considered.

### *Strategies for Case Studies*

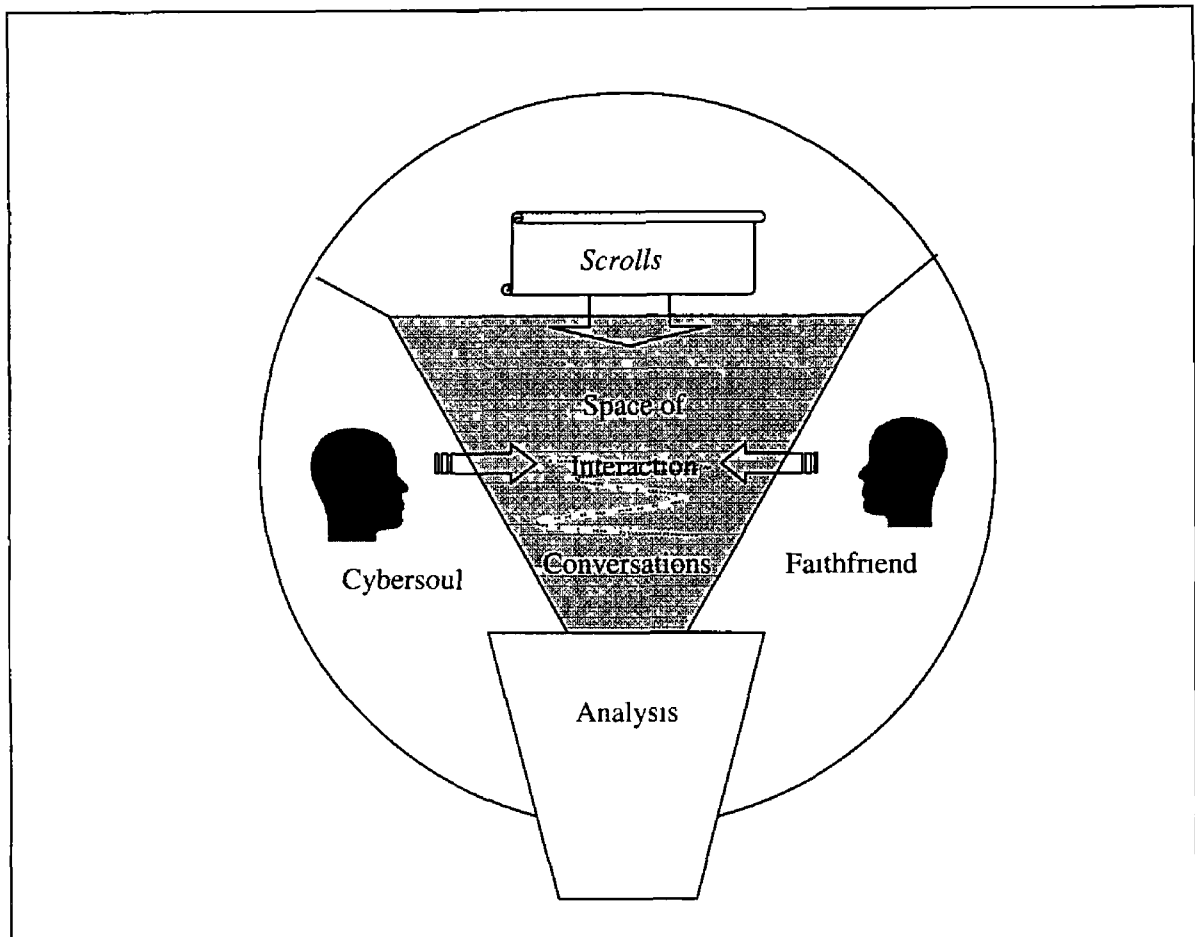
Relying on theoretical propositions, developing case descriptions, depending on both qualitative and quantitative data and examining rival explanations, are cited by Yin (2009) as strategies to be carried out during a case study. Thus, in the last section the theoretical propositions were reiterated in the review of the research questions. A major task in this chapter is the development of case descriptions. This is achieved primarily by quantifying the main qualitative and descriptive elements of each case, as detailed below.

The case descriptions of the interactions between the 13 CSs and the 11 FFs which occurred on the *Cybersouls* website was initiated, using NVivo 8, as described in the previous chapter.

Lazar et al (2010) suggest forming an integrated description of the unit of analysis before probing into the larger trends buried in the data. As explained earlier, the data relating to the interaction of the 13 cases were separated manually in MSWord and imported on to NVivo. (This also facilitated a considerable reduction of the load of the software.) Autocoding of this data in NVivo, using Heading 1 and Heading 2 together, separated the data relating to the 13 CSs according to the number of *Scrolls* completed by each one. Different combinations of autocoding produced different sets of data and the list was presented in a table in an excel sheet for cross reference and analysis. This autocoding helped to identify major components to be considered in the more detailed analysis now presented.

The set of all interactions between a CS and a FF is considered to be a case in this study. The following Figure (6.12) provides a straightforward example of a case to be analysed.

Fig 6 12 Elements in a Case



The participants, called CSs and FFs, vary according to each individual case selected for investigation, as listed in Table 5 6 in chapter 5. Also considerable variation occurred in the number of *Scrolls* completed and the conversations shared between them (see Table 9 1 List of *Scrolls* in Appendix E). There are both quantitative and qualitative differences in the data created within each case being considered. For instance, the time taken for a participant to finish *scrolls* varied, as the pace of finishing a *scroll* was not set by the co-ordinator. Rather FFs and CSs were given the freedom to set the pace in each case, at their own convenience.

## 6 4 Case Descriptions

In order to distinguish them more clearly than just using their coded references, the names of birds taken from the Bible were assigned to the 13 CSs in the cohort for analysis while corresponding names of trees, were assigned to their 11 FFs as detailed in Table 6 1 below

**Table 6 1 Pseudonyms Given to Selected CSs and FFs**

Case	CS Ref. No	Pseudonym	FF Ref. No	Pseudonym
1	CSA32	Dove (Gen 8 8)	FFA19	Acacia (Ex 25 5)
2	CSA51	Eagle (Lev 11 13)	FFA21	Almond (Eccl 12 5)
3	CSA19	Falcon (Job 28 7)	FFA14	Cedar (Ezek 31 3-5)
4	CSA35	Hawk (Lev 11 16)	FFA4	Cypress (1Kings 5 8)
5	CSA45	Heron (Lev 11 19)	FFA15	Fig (Gen 3 7)
6	CSA52	Ostrich (Lev 11 16)	FFA22	Oak (Gen 35 4)
7	CSA30	Swallow (Ps 84 3)	FFA6	Sycamore (Luke 19 4)
8	CSA11	Owl (Lev 11 17)	FFA10	Olive (Deut 24 20)
9	CSA46	Peacock (1 Kings 10 22)	FFA10	Olive (Deut 24 20)
10	CSA50	Pigeon (Lev 1 14)	FFA1	Palm (Ps 92 12)
11	CSA6	Raven (Lev 11 15)	FFA5	Pine (Isa 41 19b )
12	CSA9	Seagull (Lev 11 16)	FFA8	Poplar (Gen 30 37)
13	CSA7	Stork (Lev 11 19)	FFA6	Sycamore (Luke 19 4)

In this analysis, following some general observations, the nature of the communication which occurred in each case is described. The main task centres on the identification of factors pertaining to each case which are significant for the research. Quantification of some of the qualitative research findings is applied as a research method in this section. Also the level of conversation in each case is identified. This refers to the number of times a conversation has been exchanged between a CS and FF at any one point of interaction. A FF sends a *scroll* addressing the CS, and a conversation is initiated in relation to the *scroll*, with exchanges occurring between the two (FF-CS-FF-CS etc.) Silverman (2001), referring to this as adjacency pairs, points out that it is an important element of conversation analysis. The analysis of the 13 individual cases now follows.

### ***Case 1 – Interaction between CS Dove and FF Acacia***

***General Observations*** CS Dove and FF Acacia are both male. In the initial interaction with his FF Acacia, CS Dove mentioned that he was an active participant in the youth movement Pure in Heart. His initial conversations showed great enthusiasm towards joining the *Cybersouls* website. Acacia was selected as a FF primarily because of his participation in Youth 2000, being recommended by a leader of the movement.

***Communication using Scrolls*** Three *Scrolls* were completed between CS Dove and FF Acacia. Two of these were on 'Introduction' and one on 'Suffering'. Nine conversations in total took place during their interactions - five conversations by the FF and four by the CS. The maximum time taken for CS Dove to respond was 8 days, while FF Acacia took a maximum of 22 days to reply to his CS. The average number of words in the conversations of CS Dove was 44, whereas FF Acacia had 157 words on average.

***Comments*** Factors to be considered here include the time taken for each participant to respond to the other, the average amount of communication, and the intensity of personal communication. There seems to have been only one level of conversation between this CS and his FF. Another possible influencing factor is the response of the FF which may or may not have addressed the issues raised by the CS. The ability of the FF to connect with a CS and *vice versa* are important factors to be taken into account. These are issues which need to be probed in the detailed analysis.

### ***Case 2 – Interaction between CS Eagle and FF Almond***

***General Observations*** As in Case 1, both CS Eagle and FF Almond are male. The significant number of *Scrolls* completed (11) naturally yielded more conversations to be analysed. Eagle,

the CS, is actively involved in the Jesus Youth movement. He showed great enthusiasm and expectations during the interactivity of the *Cybersouls* project. Almond, being the co-ordinator of Jesus Youth in Ireland, was selected by the project co-ordinator to become a FF, having been recommended also by the International co-ordinator of Jesus Youth. As a Jesus Youth co-ordinator, he has undergone leadership training to accompany young people.

*Communication using Scrolls* A total of 11 *Scrolls* was completed between the CS and his FF in this case – three on ‘Introduction’, four on ‘Suffering’ and another four on ‘Happiness’. This resulted in 59 conversations being shared between them – 31 by CS Eagle and 28 by FF Almond. The higher number of conversations initiated between the two indicates that deeper communication occurred in this case. The minimum time taken by the CS to respond to a *scroll* or conversation was 1 day while the maximum time was 22 days. In the case of his FF Almond, the time taken ranged between 1 day and 10 days. The average number of words in an Eagle (CS) conversation was 141, while FF Almond had only 81 words on average.

*Comments* This case indicates that it is the CS rather than FF who provided the greater input in terms of the amount and content of communication and depth of contribution during the discussions. While the CS typed in and shared 4,371 words, only 2,268 words, i.e., just over half of that, was shared by this FF in the course of the 59 conversations initiated between the two. At the same time, FF Almond seems to have been very regular in communicating and responding to Eagle, his CS. He was encouraging and showed his appreciation of the conversations initiated by his CS. They responded to each other three times in succession. This level of interaction also shows an increase in the depth of interaction between the two in comparison with that which occurred in Case 1. The common element in this case, which

seemed to assist the interaction, was that both are participants in Jesus Youth. Therefore, their shared cultural background seems to have led to a positive outcome.

### ***Case 3 - Interaction between CS Falcon and FF Cedar***

***General Observations*** The interaction between Falcon, a female CS and Cedar, a male FF, is considered in this case. While CS Falcon had been introduced to Jesus Youth, she did not continue her participation. Likewise, her engagement in the parish as an altar server and in a parish youth group did not endure. In her initial interactions, she commented on her unfamiliarity with the *Cybersouls* website with her FF, Cedar. He is an active member of Jesus Youth and was recommended as a FF by a co-ordinator of this movement. It is worth noting that the contribution of a FF can be thought provoking and intense. This FF seemed to have a really interesting way of developing a conversation and continuing it.

***Communication using Scrolls*** Five *Scrolls* were completed by both of these participants within the stipulated time. Four of the *Scrolls* were from the 'Introduction' while the fifth dealt with 'Suffering'. While working through these five *Scrolls*, 35 conversations developed between the two. This indicates that a commendable level of discussion took place in relation to a *scroll*, with enough time given to developing the discussions. The maximum time taken by the CS to respond was 7 days, while the maximum time taken by her FF to respond was 9 days. The average number of words in the conversations of CS Falcon was 110 and that of her FF Cedar 120 words. All these figures point to a good level of compatibility between the two.

***Comments*** The total of words shared amounted to 2,090 for the CS and 1,920 in the case of the FF. As there were 7 conversations, on average, attached to a *scroll*, this is indicative also

of the depth of discussion which occurred. A detailed reading of the conversations also confirms the quality of discussions. The language, structure and the process control of the website *www.cybersouls.ie* seem to have facilitated the development of conversations. It is noted that conversations between the CS and her FF reached a maximum of five levels in succession at one point of interaction. This indicates that a promising and deep level of communication and discussion occurred in this case. (In order to provide an example of the detailed exchanges between a FF and a CS, an account of interactions in Case 3 is provided in Appendix I.)

#### ***Case 4 – Conversation between CS Hawk and FF Cypress***

*General Observations* Hawk is the CS and Cypress is the FF in this duo. Both of these participants are male. CS Hawk is active in Jesus Youth. The level of enthusiasm in his conversations seemed rather low. Cypress, his FF, had studied theology and is a graduate in Computer Science. He is active in parish activities and the parish priest recommended him to become a FF.

*Communication using Scrolls* In this case the CS and his FF completed 11 *Scrolls* between them. Four 'Introduction' and four 'Suffering' *Scrolls* were finished, together with three *Scrolls* on 'Happiness'. A total of 35 conversations took place relating to the 11 *Scrolls* shared between them, giving an average of three conversations attached to each *scroll*. This is lower per *scroll* when compared with Case 3. Yet, for the 11 *Scrolls*, with one exception, all were completed and finalised within a maximum of 4 days by both the CS and his FF. However, the average word count was on the low side – 54 for the CS and only 34 for the FF.



*Comments* During his 16 conversations attached to the 11 *Scrolls*, the CS in this case used only 864 words. As his FF only used 646 words in 19 conversations, these figures suggest a lower level of activity on the part of this particular FF both in enhancing the interaction or contributing to it. Also in comparison with Case 2, where 11 *Scrolls* had also been completed, the communication seemed to be limited. At the same time by reading the texts in the 11 *Scrolls*, responding to interactive questions and watching the videos displayed etc., both of these participants have spent time and energy while engaging in their exchanges. This makes the case interesting.

#### ***Case 5 - Interaction between CS Heron and FF Fig***

*General Observations* A female CS Heron and a male FF, Fig were the participants in this case. She is active in her parish and appeared to be enthusiastic about this project. Fig is a computer graduate who showed interest in the study. The co-ordinator recruited him to become a FF on the recommendation of a parish priest.

*Communication using Scrolls* The FF initially sent the first *scroll* of introduction and subsequently together they completed a total of 11 *Scrolls*. Two 'Introduction' *Scrolls* and two on 'Suffering' were sent by the FF and were duly completed by the CS. These were followed by a further four *Scrolls* on 'Happiness' and another three on 'Faith' were completed by the CS within the stipulated time. A total of 70 conversations developed between them - 36 from the CS and 34 from her FF. The maximum time taken by the CS to reply to her FF was 14 days while the FF took a maximum of seven days to respond. However, the time taken to reply varied from 1 to 9 days in the case of the CS and from 1 to 5 days for her FF. The conversations of the CS had an average of 186 words while those of the FF averaged 78 words.

*Comments* These are some interesting features in the communication between CS Heron and FF Fig First of all, the increase in the level of communication between the two is noted Secondly, as the exchanges reached four in succession at one point, this is indicative of an intense level of communication Thirdly, the regularity and dedication shown by both of these participants in communicating are commendable Fourthly, the variation in the contributions made by both of them, especially the CS, makes this case rich in data Even if the total number of words shared by her FF (2,652) is far lower than that of the CS (6,692), the number of conversations (CS – 36 and FF - 34) seems to be close It can mean that this FF has tried to address each CS conversation, even if in fewer words It can also be concluded that, in this case, the CS contributed more to driving the conversation forward

#### ***Case 6 - Interaction between CS Ostrich and FF Oak***

*General Observations* Two females - CS Ostrich and FF Oak are represented in this case This CS came in contact with Jesus Youth and was introduced to the website at one of its prayer meetings Oak was the FF assigned to accompany Ostrich Having made a year's commitment as a leader in Jesus Youth, she worked as a missionary

*Communication using Scrolls* A review of the interaction of CS Ostrich and FF Oak within the stipulated time frame showed that seven *Scrolls* had been completed – one 'Introductory' *scroll*, four on 'Suffering' and another 2 on 'Happiness' This resulted in a total of 32 conversations The maximum time taken by CS Ostrich to respond was 7 days while her FF Oak took a maximum of 22 days to reply The longer time taken by her FF to respond to her Ostrich may have affected the process of accompaniment Also this may have impacted on

the average number of words in a conversation which stood at 60 for the FF and only 45 for the CS in this case

*General Comments* The average of over four conversations per *scroll* suggests a comparatively good rate of interaction. At the same time, as the highest number of successive conversations was only two, this may be indicative of a lack of depth and a lack of creativity and dynamism on the part of both participants. Yet, an initial enthusiasm and development of friendship could be detected in the textual interactions. While the newness of the concept may have been an issue, it is not clear why the FF here took so long to respond to her CS.

#### ***Case 7 – Interaction between CS Swallow and FF Sycamore***

*General Observations* This describes the interaction between CS Swallow and his FF Sycamore. The Cybersoul, Swallow, was very enthusiastic about the *Cybersouls* portal and FF Sycamore was assigned to accompany him on his journey of faith. She is very active in *Pure in Heart* and was recommended as a FF by a parish curate. Her enthusiasm was evident in her communication with her CS. (This FF also accompanied another CS in Case 13.)

*Communication using Scrolls* Six *scrolls* were completed between Swallow and his FF Sycamore - one each on 'Introduction', 'Faith' and 'Sacraments' and the other three on 'Happiness'. Within these six *Scrolls*, they completed 69 conversations between them, 31 being initiated by the CS and 38 by his FF. It is also interesting to note that both the CS and his FF responded considerably regularly and frequently to the other person's communication. FF Sycamore responded the same day to her CS's conversations which took an average of 3 days for a reply. The average number of words in the cybersoul's conversation was 44 while that of his FF was 110.

*Comments* FF Sycamore seemed to have had the upper hand both in terms of the number of conversations (38 31) and the pace of response. However, as the level of communications reached a maximum of six in their conversations, this indicates that they achieved considerable depth in their interaction.

#### ***Case 8 – Interaction between CS Owl and FF Olive***

*General observations* These were two female participants in Case 7, the CS Owl and her FF Olive. Here again, they both are female participants. As they completed 24 *Scrolls*, they exceeded the completion score in all the other cases. CS Owl's interactions indicate that she enjoyed the accompaniment of her FF online Olive, an active leader in Jesus Youth who had undertaken its leadership training programme, was recommended by a co-ordinator of Jesus Youth as a FF.

*Communication using Scrolls* As reported above, the CS and her FF in this case completed 24 *Scrolls* together. These included four *Scrolls* each on 'Introduction', 'Suffering', 'Happiness', 'Faith', 'Prayer' and 'Sacraments' which were covered over 79 conversations. It is interesting to record that the maximum time taken for a *scroll* to be completed was less than one week. The average number of words in the conversations of CS Owl is only 35 while the corresponding average of her FF is 57.

*Comments* When compared with some of the previous cases, the average number of words in the conversations is less. Likewise, the total number of words exchanged between this CS and her FF is comparatively smaller. Therefore it is to be assumed that, in this particular interaction, it was not the volume of interaction but rather the frequency of response and

regularity of conversations that were significant in driving communication. In a conversation the CS, Owl, said that, each evening, she eagerly awaited the response of her FF.

### ***Case 9 – Interaction between CS Peacock and FF Olive***

***General Observations*** Olive, the same FF, as in Case 7, also accompanied another female CS, Peacock in Case 8. Here again, the completion of *Scrolls* reached a high score (21). The CS, Peacock is an active member of Jesus Youth. As mentioned in the previous case, a coordinator of Jesus Youth recommended Olive as a FF.

***Communication using Scrolls*** A total of 21 *Scrolls* was completed in this case. Four *Scrolls* each were completed for the first five themes: 'Introduction', 'Suffering', 'Happiness', 'Faith', and 'Prayer'. Finally, one *scroll* on 'Sacraments' was finished. This work involved 78 conversations between the CS and her FF, 38 from CS Peacock and 40 from her FF Olive. The maximum time taken for CS Peacock to respond to her FF was 12 days. As in the previous case with the same FF, the response time was short, the maximum time taken being four days. The average number of words used by the CS was 45 while her FF used 33.

***Comments*** In this case and the previous one (Case 7), where Olive acted as a FF, both CS were completely new to her. The common factor which may have helped the interaction was that all three participants are female. Other than that, this case included totally different features which could have occurred due to cultural differences. Even though the total number of words shared by the FF in the two cases varied considerably (Case 7 – CS 1,080, FF 2,539 words, Case 8 – CS 1,733, FF 1,324 words), two features are common to both of these interactions - regularity of contact by the FF and the frequency in sending a *scroll*.

While the responses of both CSs also showed considerable variation, both of them seem to have taken part in the project with enthusiasm

### ***Case 10 – Interaction between CS Pigeon and FF Palm***

*General Observations* Pigeon, a CS, was accompanied by Palm, the assigned FF, in this case. Both are male participants. CS Pigeon is active in the Jesus Youth movement. His initial conversations in the introductory *Scrolls* revealed his enthusiasm and eagerness in relation to the project. FF Palm, as a Jesus Youth leader, had received training in youth leadership. The co-ordinator of Jesus Youth in Ireland recommended him as a FF.

*Communication using Scrolls* This duo completed 23 *Scrolls*, the second highest level among the cases selected for analysis. Four *Scrolls* each were completed on the first five themes: 'Introduction', 'Suffering', 'Happiness', 'Faith', and 'Prayer', in addition to three *Scrolls* on 'Sacraments'. CS Pigeon read the *Scrolls* and responded to the interactive questions carefully. Exchanges between this CS and his FF took place over 114 conversations – 50 by CS Pigeon and 64 by his FF Palm. While the maximum time taken by the CS to respond was 14 days, he took more than a week to do so on only three occasions. Otherwise there was evidence of continuity, dedication and regularity in responding to a *scroll* sent by his FF. The maximum response time of FF Palm was only four days. This suggests that this FF kept up the momentum in responding to his CS. The average number of words in the conversations of CS Pigeon was 120 while that of his FF was 75.

### ***Case 11 – Interactions between CS Raven and FF Pine***

*General Observations* CS Raven interacted with FF Pine in this case. Raven is female and Pine is male. As mentioned in the section on selection and reduction of data, the CSs in cases

10, 11 and 12, while continuing their interaction on the website, did not respond to the survey questions CS Raven, is an active member of Youth 2000 At the introductory stage she expressed eagerness about the project, coupled with some apprehension Pine, the FF accompanying her, as a Jesus Youth leader, was recommended by a co-ordinator of this youth movement

*Communication using Scrolls* Four 'Introduction' *Scrolls* and one on 'Suffering' constituted the total of five *Scrolls* completed between CS Raven and FF Pine over the course of 28 conversations The response time between these two participants was short, the maximum time taken by the CS to respond to her FF being just two days, with her FF replying in the same time period (This is very close to a 'live chat' ) The conversations of the CS averaged 61 words while her FF used 94

*Comments* The interaction between CS Raven and her FF Pine seems to have taken place within short intervals which may have been an important driving force in their communication Also, reflecting on the volume of communication initiated by her FF to that of the CS, there seems to be a danger that the CS may have been somewhat intimidated As the maximum level of communication was only two, this may be indicative also of a lack of depth in the conversation

### ***Case 12 – Interactions between CS Seagull and FF Poplar***

*General Observations* Both participants in this case are female - CS Seagull and her FF Poplar Seagull's initial enthusiasm for the project was moderate As a Jesus Youth leader, FF Poplar had undertaken its leadership training programme

*Communication using Scrolls* Similar to Case 10, five *Scrolls* were completed this time, over 24 conversations between CS Seagull and her FF Poplar - four in 'Introduction' and one in 'Suffering' It seems that CS Seagull took more time to respond to her FF The maximum time she took to reply was 24 days while her FF responded in 7 days The average number of words communicated by the CS in a conversation was 36, with a corresponding average of 55 from her FF

*Comment* In this case there seems to be an imbalance between the number of words communicated by the FF when compared to that of her CS It is observed however that their interactions, even if brief, were substantial They seemed to encompass reading, reflection and serious learning CS Seagull communicated 549 words and received 770 words from her FF These contributions need to be analysed in more depth in order to identify the undercurrents in their interaction

### ***Case13 – Interaction between CS Stork and FF Sycamore***

*General Observations* The interaction in this case is between CS Stork and her FF Sycamore who also accompanied another CS in Case 7 Stork, the CS under consideration, has participated in *Youth 2000* and the youth movement *Pure in Heart* She showed great enthusiasm and appreciation for the project FF Sycamore was assigned to accompany Stork on her journey of faith She is very active in *Pure in Heart* and as mentioned in Case 7, was recommended as a FF by a parish curate Her enthusiasm was evident in her communication with her CS

*Communication using Scrolls* Four *Scrolls* were sent by FF Sycamore to her CS Stork - One on 'Introduction' and the other three on 'Suffering' It is remarkable that, within just four



*Scrolls*, they completed 86 conversations between them, initiating 46 each. It is also interesting to note that three *Scrolls*, involving around 80 conversations, were completed within a record time of three days. The average number of words in the CS's conversation was 60 while that of her FF was 80.

*Comments* To have developed around 80 conversations within three days, as happened in this case, is very significant. Some elements relating to their cultural affinity may become apparent in this case.

Case 13 completes the consideration of the individual cases selected for more detailed analysis. All the above mentioned conversations were subject to close scrutiny, using NVivo. A composite analysis of the findings is presented in the next section.

## **6.5 Consolidation of Case Studies**

*General Comments* A total of 24 participants was involved in the 13 cases under review - 13 CSs and 11 FFs, two FFs covering two cases each. Regarding the gender balance, there are five male Cybersouls and seven male FFs, whereas there are eight female CSs and four female FFs. This indicates that the male/female ratio is almost inversely proportional between CSs and FFs, with males predominating on the FF side and females on the CS side.

*Usage of Scrolls and Conversations* A total of 136 *Scrolls* was completed over the 13 case studies (see Table 5.6). However, the completion rate for individual CSs varied considerably, ranging from three to 24. More than ten *Scrolls* were completed in six cases, while the completion rate of the remaining six varied from three to seven. The participating CSs and their FFs shared 718 conversations between them, giving an average of 55 per case and

almost five conversations per *scroll*. In total, 339 conversations were initiated by CSs while 379 were initiated by FFs.

The cumulative word count in the 13 cases amounted to 57,499. This will be considered in more detail in the next chapter. A wide spread was observed in the number of words shared, the highest number being 10,754 and the lowest only 961. More than 5,000 words were exchanged between a CS and a FF in five cases, another four cases shared between 5,000 and 2,000 words while just over 1000 words were shared in three cases. The exchange of words was just below 1000 in the remaining one case.

Comparing the number of words shared between CSs and their FFs in individual cases, four shared a balanced number of words between them. In five other cases the FFs shared considerably more words. The number of words shared by a CS exceeded those of a FF in only three cases. The count of the succession of conversations at any one point gives an indication of the level of conversation between a CS and a FF. Considering this variable, it can be concluded that deep levels of communication were evident in most of the cases. Only three cases had less than three levels of conversation, while the remaining ten cases had three or more levels, the maximum level reaching seven. In some cases, while the time taken to respond to the other participant seemed long, the conversations seem to have deepened in quality. In contrast, in other cases, when more time was taken, there seemed to be less depth in communication.

*Factors Influencing Interaction* Some of the factors driving the conversation can be identified in this descriptive study. The virtual presence of another person may be the primary catalyst for this online journey. Prompt and immediate response by participants, addressing

each question or conversation shared by the other party, acknowledgement, appreciation, clarification and contributing to the learning space may all be factors which impact positively on the conversation in the CSs' faith development journey. Additional factors, such as creative and dynamic interaction, using multimedia, also seem to have contributed to the journey of participants in the *Cybersouls* portal. The contribution of the *Scrolls* to the progress of journey is another aspect which needs to be evaluated. The influence of the newness of concept, the terminologies used in the website, its layout and user friendliness all need to be taken into account in further analysis. Overall, there is a rich data set to be studied in more depth which is expected to produce more significant insights into the nature of online faith development through accompaniment. This task is undertaken in the next chapter (7).

## **6.6 Conclusion**

The chapter commenced with a presentation of the findings relating to the questionnaire. The analysis revealed an overall positive attitude in the responses of participants to the *Cybersouls* website. The strategies in using NVivo as a tool for analysing the findings related to the 13 Case Studies were then explained. Next, the findings in respect of each of the 13 case studies were presented followed by a consolidation of the results. The more detailed analysis of these case studies, is considered in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 7

### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CASES

A detailed analysis of the data relating to the 13 selected cases is the main content of this chapter. Various methods and techniques used while conducting this analysis are set out in the opening section. The next section features the dynamics of online interaction in the project. Following on from this, the characteristics of virtual communication are examined. Finally, the concept of cyberspace as a space for evangelisation is examined.

#### 7.1 Methods of Analysis

Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) uphold the need to utilise more than one type of analysis, to increase its validity. This section sets out the methods which informed the researcher in undertaking the analysis of the data. Primarily, a qualitative approach was adopted in addressing this task.

One of the established and basic qualitative methods, Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), was the basic method applied. Grounded theorists suggest a careful, line-by-line reading of the text while looking for processes, actions, assumptions, and consequences (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). Constant comparison is a basic activity of this method (Charmaz, 2006). In this study manifest-content-analysis was adopted in quantifying various elements involved in the communication between CSs and FFs. The interplay of manifest and latent content analysis was applied as the need arose (Berg, 2007, Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

Fundamentally, the data under consideration here comprised sets of conversations between two individuals – a CS and a FF. Hence, various guidelines of *Conversation Analysis* (CA) and *Discourse Analysis* (DA) (Silverman, 2001) are also included. According to Silverman, CA involves “people’s methods for producing orderly social interaction in sequential order” (level of conversation), while DA “studies a discourse as texts and talk in social practices in rhetorical and argumentative organization” (p. 189). CA and DA were applied to the data embedded in the *Scrolls* provided on the website. The initial findings from the data were presented already in chapter 6.

Web-based in-depth interviews are mentioned by Berg (2007, p. 125) as a way of taking advantage of the technology available for research. *Cybersouls* can be categorized under asynchronous environments. The communication in the *Cybersouls* project is unique as it took place between a CS and a FF in a closed environment of *Cyberspace* in an asynchronous manner. It is not the same as e-mail, message boards or private bulletin posts referred to by Berg. Having had faith development as its purpose, it tried to initiate discussions based on faith material presented in *Scrolls*.

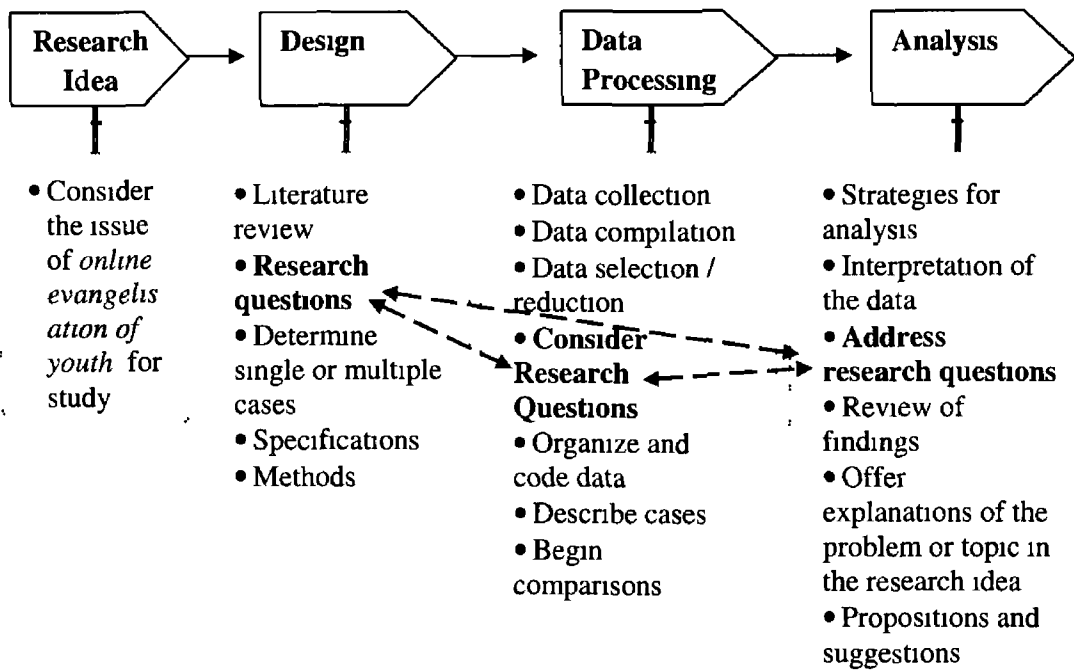
*Key Word in Context* (KWIC) is prescribed by Onwuegbuzie (2007) as an important method to assist qualitative inquiry. The application of this method assisted the researcher in extracting latent trends buried in the data while comparing codes relating to variables.

### ***Theory Based Research***

According to Yin (2003, p. 28) “for case studies, theory development as part of the design phase is essential whether the ensuing case study’s purpose is to develop or test theory.” This “theory-before-research” approach (Berg 2007, p. 319) is adopted in this study. The theory

covered in the first three chapters assisted the research design and helped the researcher to identify the research questions. Possible theoretical landscapes for the study were discussed initially and this also informed the development of the research project. Berg adds that theory-before-research can support generalisations arising from the study. The model adopted in this study, as described in Fig 7.1 below, is an adaptation of the version given by Berg (p. 321).

**Fig 7.1 Research Model Adopted in this Study**



Hence, case study being the methodology used as the encompassing method, this research has the characteristics mentioned in Fig 7.1 even if other methods of analysis were applied also during the data collection and analysis.

### ***Application of the Methods in This Study***

To initiate the detailed analysis of the 13 selected cases, the conversations of CSs and FFs were separated. A general open *in vivo-coding* (Charmaz, 2006) in NVivo gave rise to more

than 250 codes each from the conversations of these participant types. This included careful reading, reflecting and constant comparing of the data. Significant words, phrases, sentences, meanings, emotions, undercurrents and anything else the researcher found significant in relation to the research were coded as case nodes in NVivo. These relevant codes constituted the foundational elements of emergent theory in a crude form. Pertinent memos connected to snippets of codes were entered as the coding progressed. These coded segments of the data were labelled appropriately and made available for further and closer observation. Grounded theory and content analysis were applied to this ongoing process.

Those codes were re-read, rearranged and classified as the patterns buried in the data began to emerge. Axial coding (Adams et al, 2008) was adopted here to sort the codes according to the central ideas prevalent in the data. The case nodes in NVivo were converted to tree nodes, to bring the related codes under emergent sub-categories and central themes. (A screen shot of the coding of themes using tree nodes is provided in Appendix G.) It was seen that some trends were common to both CSs and FFs. Then key words in the codes were identified in their context (KWIC). Conversations were looked at together in their order (CA) and meaning (DA) as they occurred between a CS and a FF in each case. As a result of analysing the data, three main themes emerged. These are the Dynamics of Online Interaction, the Characteristics of Virtual Communication and Evangelisation in Cyberspace. As the dynamics of online interactions primed interactivity between FFs and their CSs, they are first for consideration. The thirteen cases under review have been listed in Table 5.6 in chapter 5. The allocated pseudonyms given (Table 6.1, chapter 6) to the CSs and FFs are re-used here in reporting on the analysis in this chapter.

## 7.2 The Dynamics of Online Interaction

The interactive and dynamic tools embedded in the *Cybersouls* portal and deeply connected to youth culture differentiate this journey from other approaches to evangelisation. *Scrolls*, used to carry the message of the Good News, are made up of texts, pictures and videos, providing a foundation for communication between CSs and their FFs. While the number of words in individual *Scrolls* varied from 111 to 600, all *Scrolls* incorporated both texts and pictures. They integrated a facility to comment, using either comment boxes or conversation snippets. Some were built with interactive modules such as radio buttons, ‘match the following’ and ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions, while others used videos to convey a message. Meditative videos created and launched in Youtube were included to suit a particular theme in the *Cybersouls* project. In addition, videos from Youtube uploaded by others, which the co-ordinator found relevant to a specific theme, were included in a *scroll*. Cumulatively, the material on these *Scrolls* contributed to the dynamism of the communication in *Cybersouls*.

### *Dynamic Components*

As can be seen in Table 7.1 below, the *Scrolls* contained a wide range of tools. A more detailed distribution of these components, by *scroll*, is given in Appendix H.

**Table 7.1 Summary of Tools Used in *Scrolls***

Dynamic tools	Text	Picture	Video	Comment box	Yes /no	Match the following	Choose from the list	Number of Conversation snippets
<b>Total</b>	24	24	6	24	5	2	2	42

As can be seen in Table 7.1, six *Scrolls* incorporated at least one Youtube video. All *Scrolls* had ‘Comment boxes’ in order to evoke a response from the CS. Five *Scrolls* contained



'yes/no' questions while another two *Scrolls* each had 'match the following' and 'choose from the list' options. All *Scrolls* had been provided with at least one (maximum three) 'conversation snippets' which, if used, could increase the interactivity of the communication. The above compilation and use of catechetical material, using multimedia, is one advantage of the medium of the Internet in conversing with young people. This was expected to increase the connectivity with young people who now live in an image centred-world in Cyberspace (Beaudoin, 1998). Also, the use of these dynamic tools constructed a space in *Cybersouls* where dialogue and interactivity thrived. A subsequent analysis of the conversations revealed that all these tools had been used by participants in their communications. So it can be concluded that the development of a dynamic and interactive catechesis using multimedia (Castells, 2000) had engaged constructively with young people (John Paul II, 1979). Some of the conversations selected for analysis revealed explicit appreciation of these interactive approaches, as can be seen below.

### *Scrolls*

As explained earlier, *Scrolls* contained the main catechetical material which carried the message of the Good News. All discussions which evolved in this portal were as a result of sharing *Scrolls*. The analysis of the conversations revealed that the terminology of '*scroll*' also conveyed an important message. A query in NVivo to search for the word '*scroll*' and its variants identified 20 instances of its use by participants in different forms which were embedded in their conversations. The first was a general mention of *Scrolls*, showing their acceptance and familiarity with using the terminology, e.g., "I find it enriching to be able to go online and have this great website and read the *Scrolls* assigned and be able to share the faith openly" (Sycamore, Case 7 Conversations, *Scroll* 1). This clearly demonstrated an appreciation of *Scrolls*. Another one refers to the word '*scroll*' with fondness "This makes

me more happy, that is why I wrote it in the above scroll what you think?" (Pigeon, Case 7, *Scroll* 10) The participants have used the verb 'scroll' also to communicate "I thought I scrolled u back on the previous ones So waited for ur [sic] reply " (Pigeon, Case 7, *Scroll* 19) His FF seemed to have used it in the same way, as a verb, "No need to worry Whenever you have time scroll me back" (Palm, Case 7, *Scroll* 21) The above examples show the participants' acceptance of the term and how they became comfortable with its usage The culture of young people seems to favour terminologies like this online as a catch phrase Similar usage in other online networking are 'writing on the wall' (Facebook), 'scrapping' (Orkut), 'tweeting' (Twitter) etc These types of terminologies seem to give the inhabitants of these online communities a unique 'clan' outlook Therefore the usage of these kinds of 'clannish' terminologies can increase the connectivity to young people (Dulles, 2006) Instances of participants utilising and appreciating other dynamic tools now follow

### *Images*

Discussions seem to have progressed around the pictures used in *Scrolls* A FF said that "The blind woman who is making her journey with the walking stick is an apt picture on what is faith" (FF Palm, Case 10, *Scroll* 13) This refers to a picture of a blind woman with a white cane, used to depict the enlightenment of faith The FF captured the meaning clearly and the CS also continued the discussion along the same lines, showing how the images could influence the discussions online On another occasion a CS connected an image of a pupa turning into a butterfly with the topic of prayer

As the pupa turns into butterfly, prayer transforms our life from each & every bondage, sin or problem into a child of God's freedom The more we pray the more we can experience the freedom & love of God Prayer is the shortest distance between us and a problem (CS Peacock, Case 9, *Scroll* 18)

These instances confirm that direct use has been made of the images for discussion, endorsing the claim that the use of multimedia 'talks' to the mind of youth online, as proposed in chapter 3

### *Conversation Snippets*

The fact that all participants made use of the conversation snippets was evident from the high number of conversations reciprocated and deepened. Conversation snippets, which could be initiated dynamically between two participants, were the main component that made this space one of dialogue and interactivity. This is clarified in later discussions. The dynamic interactive space of communication between a CS and a FF was constructed in a versatile manner with these conversation snippets.

### *Youtube videos*

There were two kinds of videos used in the construction of *Scrolls*, as mentioned above, video meditations made specifically for the project and those posted from youtube. Both of them seem to have worked well with the participants. Six *Scrolls* were embedded with videos. The open coding in NVivo produced 20 instances of participants commenting about these videos. Some examples now follow. The first comment refers to a video meditation which was prepared as the fourth *scroll* on the theme of happiness. This meditation was part of a reflection on happiness called *Be joyful cos God loves you*.

As I went through the video the thing that struck me initially was the distance

I have heard the story about the walk to Emmaus many times and read the bible passage also but till this day failed to take note about the distance which they travelled ” (CS Eagle, Case 2, *Scroll* 12)

This CS seems to have listened carefully to the meditation. The constructive reflection on this video contains 291 words in the original version, abbreviated to 47 quoted above. The reflection continued and there were two more levels of conversation (clarified later) between the CS and his FF where the discussion became more profound. The capacity of multimedia to proclaim the Gospel creatively on the Internet is visible in this example.

Another comment about a video meditation prepared specifically for the *Cybersouls* project probably confirms one of the important assumptions on which this study was initiated, i.e., how the so-called 'nonreal' online communication can mediate the immediacy of the power of the word of God. This video meditation was part of the fourth *scroll* on suffering and was about embracing healthy change. CS Eagle's reflection on this meditation suggests that the content is applicable to every Christian. "The cycle of falling, dying, and rising is of great importance to every Christian. I would say that falling is a thing that happens every now and then to human beings" (CS Eagle, Case 2, *Scroll 4*). However, the comment below clearly articulates Peacock's experience in the *Cybersouls* website.

Our words and music carries great power. It has the power of life and death. The music, voice and words of this meditation have an inner healing & life giving effect. Problems & sufferings even death can be solved with Jesus. The message of Holy Eucharist which is our bread of life is absolutely true. May God bless us all! (Peacock, Case 9, *Scroll 4*)

Peacock and her FF completed a total of 21 *Scrolls* involving 78 conversations. Such a comment from this active CS endorses the fact that careful preparation of videos which can contribute to the story line in a *scroll* can be effective in carrying the message of the Good

News These kinds of creative uses of the media can mediate the immediacy (Granfield, 1991) of the Good News in cyberspace

As referred to earlier, other videos from youtube posted to contribute to the story line in a *scroll* were utilised and appreciated by the participants Some conversations confirm this, e g

I think a lot of people will relate to this video I find myself often using these exact excuses to avoid sharing my faith I sometimes feel I dont know enough and the fact that I am young I feel people might not listen to me but when I really consider it, these are just excuses (CS Owl, Case 8, *Scroll* 16)

The Internet, which young people are born into, was easily conquered by them and this is explicit in their additional postings of videos mainly from youtube and other links through which they tried to convey some message in their reflective spaces

The data on conversations conveyed an important message in this section the dynamic and interactive space created in the *Cybersouls* website was a space which could constructively influence the minds of young people through the careful use of some of the tools which were specific to communication on the Internet, as identified earlier in the literature review

### **7 3 Characteristics of Virtual Communication**

Various elements relating to the participation of CSs and FFs in this project and quantitative measures of their interactions were set out in chapter 6 Regarding the selected cases, their conversations are considered now, in more depth, in the light of the theory developed in the previous chapters

Conversations were initiated by a FF after introducing a *scroll* to a CS. An example of an introductory conversation now follows.

Dear Owl, Welcome to this great venture. I am Palm, living and working in Dublin. I really appreciate your interest in deepening your faith. May the Holy Spirit lead us to the ultimate source of all wisdom, knowledge and love. Let's start our online faith journey here. (FF Palm, Case 8, *Scroll* 1)

The above conversation preceded the contents of a *scroll* and other conversations were reciprocated between a FF and a CS as the CS read and responded to the contents of a *scroll*. The following is an example of this kind of conversation between a CS and a FF. Notice the flow of communication between the two participants taken from Case 3.

(Content of *Scroll*) May this journey begin by lighting the candle of faith. Post a similar prayer here.

Falcon: Let this journey show us the true meaning of being devoted to Christ.

Cedar: That's wonderful. Sometimes before starting a journey it is always good to know where you are and where are we going. Don't you think so? GOD Bless you.

Falcon: Hi again! I'm going to try my best to answer your questions honestly. The most important thing that motivates me to know more about my faith is the security it brings. Hope this message is not too long.

Cedar: Hi, Thanks for your honest answer. Very soon you will find that GOD will reveal more of his goodness in your life. Do you cherish a one to one relationship with Jesus?

Falcon: I've always found myself talking in my mind about anything and

everything     Here's a link to a song that I really like

[http //www youtube com/watch?v=lD\\_pCr\\_Xrnc&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lD_pCr_Xrnc&feature=related)

Cedar The song's got a good caption Is it just two of you in the family?     Also

I was thinking of taking on the next scroll which is to do with another topic of "suffering"     let me know and I will pray for you as your friend in faith

Falcon I have two brothers and both my parents     I hope that the Lord continues to give us his great blessings and keep us in his hands

Cedar Hi again, sorry I took some time to come back Almost all the people that I know talks [sic] about a call of GOD in their life     Do let me know if you need more clarification

Falcon I think, I'm understanding what you mean But I cannot come up with an answer     I'm not sure if this has to be made into another scroll but if so, feel free

(Case 3, *Scroll 1*)

An introductory conversation between two participants and the continuation of another set of conversations are given above to show how conversations occurred in the virtual reality of the *Cybersouls* project The conversations considered here are asynchronous This interactive and dialogical communication seems to possess features of a constructivist model of communication (Pearson and Nelson, 2000, Granfield, 1994) This communication model was presented in chapter 3 as part of the discussion on various models of communication

A perceived tension between the real and the virtual was identified in the discussions in the previous chapters, asking how real the virtual is (Mirzoeff, 1999, Castells, 2000, Rheingold, 2000) Suppose the communication between the above participants had taken place face-to-

face. If they wanted to retrieve it the next day, it has to be recalled from their memory. Sometimes this can be a tedious task and may be only partly retrieved. In contrast, with communication online, a person can go back at any time and find the exact conversation there. This objectivity and tangibility of online communication make it more real in one way. In other words, the reality of the virtual is, in a way, more 'real' than the real itself.

At the same time, it is considered that the geographical distance between persons communicating can impoverish an online communication, in comparison with the real (McQuail, 2000). However, the data of interactive communication developed on the *Cybersouls* portal spoke eloquently about the depth and reality of online communication. NVivo enabled the coding of all similar communications from both CSs and their FFs. These were quantified in the previous chapter. An analysis of these codes in relation to the 13 cases being considered here revealed the following categories:

- a) Fluency of communication - language and words,
- b) Emotions and gestures,
- c) Development of interactivity, trust and relationship,
- d) Conscious reflection – personal, serious communication

Let the data speak as each of these four categories is now considered in more detail.

#### ***a) Fluency of Communication***

Ease of communication or fluency is something which may go unnoticed in our daily lives. This may happen also in the case of communication online. In general, the communications from the 13 case studies seemed to be normal, lively and fluent. The use of colloquial language is considered to be a sign of normality in communication (Danesi, 2000) and words



exchanged indicated liveliness and informality. Also, there were expressions of apology, gratitude and agreement. Some examples from the conversations between CSs and their FFs endorse these points.

### *Colloquial Language*

Their language indicated ease and normality.

Ohh cool, I am back to track now, Am fully (CS Pigeon, Case 10),

Wow! What a beautiful way you have taken suffering in your life!

(FF Oak, Case 6),

### *Addressing Personally*

Addressing each other personally, even after the initial communication, showed liveliness as well as informality, making a personal impression.

Olive, I would like to let you know (CS Owl, Case 8),

Aw great Swallow, I didn't know (FF Sycamore, Case 7),

### *Expressions of apology*

These showed how the communication of the other party was considered important by the receiver.

I would like to apologize for not being so active thus far but I will try harder from now on. Thank you for sticking with me (CS Falcon, Case 3)

Hi Dove, Sorry for the delayed response but it has been a bit hectic in work!

(FF Acacia, Case 1)

Similar expressions of gratitude and agreements were also identified in further analysis.

The above examples show that the language and words used by the participants in the communication in the *Cybersouls* portal were similar to those used in daily life. This confirms the notable level of fluency in online communication (Danesi, 2000) making it all the more real.

### ***b) Emotions and Gestures***

It was seen in chapter 3 that the Internet, when understood as a virtual space, transformed the idea of space away from reality to the interior world of the self (Mirzoeff, 1999). The way in which people viewed this human interaction online was different. Some people found various landscapes in cyberspace in which different human needs could be met. In other words, human beings used it for their own purposes. This section clarifies an important dimension of human reality, the world of emotions and gestures, captured in the virtual space of the *Cybersouls* portal.

Human communication contains emotions and gestures, making it qualitatively affective and hearty. Similar emotions and gestures were identified in the communication between CSs and FFs online, making the communication more human (Thurlow et al, 2004) as identified in chapter 3. The word of God is to be presented to this human presence. This presence, unveiled here, will contribute to more effective evangelisation in the future. Also it confirms that online space is not a sterile space. Some of the emotions and gestures captured in the interactions given below clarify this stance.

#### ***Excitement***

The journey started by both CSs and FFs was seen to be explicitly exciting.

I go between thinking sometimes I am advanced to discovering very often I'm beginning again, but it's a start anyway. Looking forward to deepening my faith in this new way. God Bless" (CS Heron, Case 5)

I'm really excited to accompany you on this faith journey! (FF Oak, Case 6)

The expressions of excitement differed in two ways. On the part of CSs, they wondered how the journey was going to unfold in this virtual space (given the newness of the venture) and expressed eagerness about deepening their faith (a personal journey). FFs showed fervour in accompanying them and sharing faith online. The need for deepening their faith journey on the part of CSs and the fervour of FFs in accompanying them and sharing faith online can be complementary. This confirms the views that the optimism of youth and the willingness of elders to accompany complement each other (Paul VI, 1975a and John Paul II, 1998b). The participants were able to express their emotions vividly and it seemed that people had great expectation about such a journey online.

### *Apprehension*

There were some expressions of *apprehension*

As for what I expect from this endeavor, I hope to learn as much as I can and share as well. Sharing with someone I do not know and have never seen but still knowing that they only have good intentions for me gives a sense of comfort.

(Falcon, Case 3)

Only three of the 13 Cybersouls expressed concerns about being accompanied by a person unknown to them as well as their unfamiliarity with this new concept. It is observed that none of the FFs expressed this kind of an emotion. The induction they received may explain this.

The issue of trust may be an important factor for consideration, at least for some people. How to win the confidence of people in allowing themselves to take part in this kind of a personal journey may be an important question to be asked.

### *Appreciation*

Instances of mutual appreciation were found in the conversations of both CSs and FFs.

Hey Sycamore! Sorry I'm still figuring this out-just saw this beautiful post now!!

Wow praise God for you Sycamore! How encouraging it is to read all of the above (CS Stork, Case 13),

very good reflection Eagle when I think about beatitudes, yes this is the great assurance (FF Almond, Case 2)

The occurrence of words of appreciation shows the beginning of a relationship on which this kind of a ministry could be built. Interactivity was beginning to take shape and the responses of both participants were crucial in developing it, as can be seen below.

### *Acknowledgement and confirmation*

Continuation of a conversation occurred gradually arising from the acknowledgement and confirmation of the other party. Specific instances of these were identified in the communication, expressing the desire to continue the conversation and the new journey. The apprehension expressed earlier seemed to have given way to further deepening of the relationship, as seen below.

I agree with the above statements. Faith saves us from all worries.

(CS Peacock, Case 9)

What a wonderful thought      You should share these thoughts with someone else as well    May be someone else who is going through a similar situation

(FF Palm, Case 10)

The above examples were not only indicative of the fluency with which a normal communication progresses through acknowledgement and confirmation of a previous thought but also showed some signs of eagerness on the part of the CS to continue the conversation, with the FF providing encouragement. Emotions and gestures play a crucial part in human communication and the presence of these in online communication increased its wholesomeness and confirmed its fluency (Thurlow et al, 2004). Also, this was the starting point of an online professional relationship where interactivity was beginning to take shape.

***c) Development of Relationship, Trust and Interactivity***

Cyberspace, as a human space, functions at different levels in its technical viability to make an interactive space.

*Relational Space*

Explicit signs of enjoying the interaction and accompaniment were found in the conversations of both participants, as can be seen in the examples cited below.

So its easier to talk about faith when I am talking to people who have faith

(CS Heron, Case 5)

Ha Ha, you made me laugh so much there!!! You are funny!!! See the Lord always always brings Joy to his own This is wonderful, it is strange how two faith friends can be so powerfully inspired without even having met one another, isn't it amazing how our Spirituality [sic] works within us all

(FF Sycamore, Case 13)

In the above example there are explicit signs of recognising the presence of the other companion It is not just a specific word that makes this clear The relational aspect is inherent in the set of words that constitutes the conversation Both the CS and FF seemed to enjoy the company of the other party, showing that even if people had not met, strong relationships could be developed online (McKenna and Bargh, 2004) This ministry was expected to develop on relationships, as discussed in the theory in both Chapters 3 and 4

### *Developing Trust*

Relational interaction may be said to exist when trust developed between participants This was evident in the sharing of personal issues between a CS and a FF

When I was ten years old I experienced [sic] war in my country, it lasted for 4 years I experienced hunger, loss, fear at that time I was angry with God and questioning him why we have to go through all this sufferings

(CS Ostrich, Case 6)

It is observed that instances of sharing very personal struggles with their FFs showed that their CSs trusted them This trust is a sign of relationship online (ThurLOW et al, 2004)

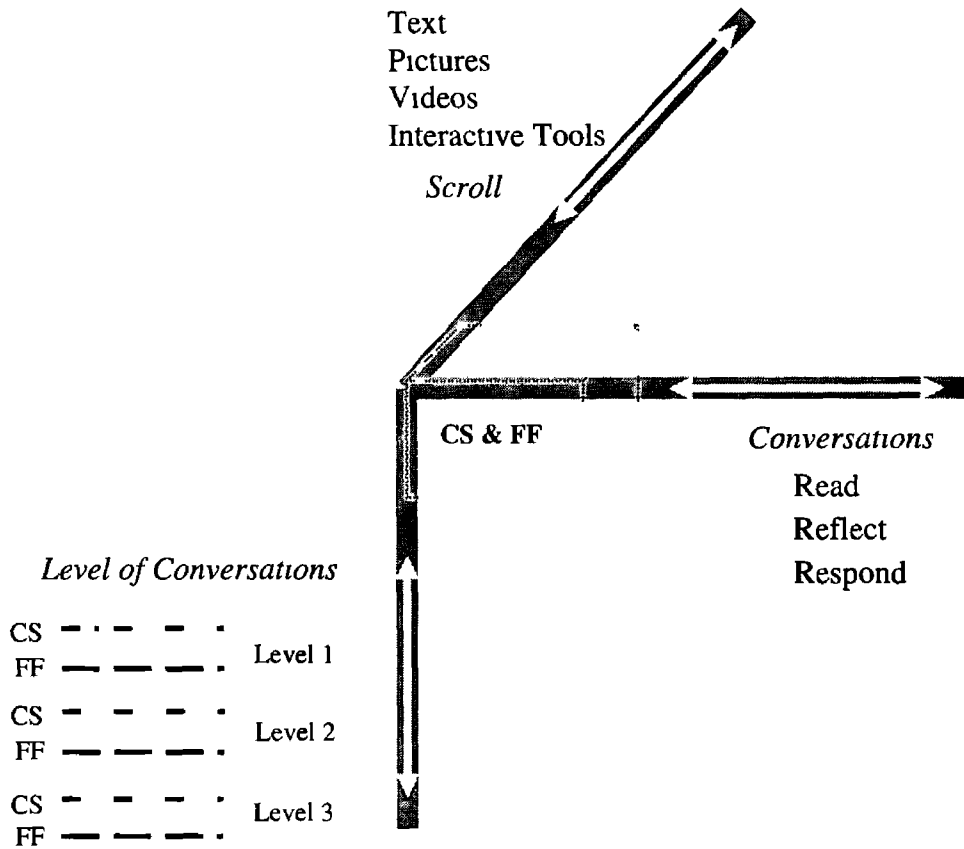
### *Interactivity*

Dialogue and interactivity, built up on online relationships, seemed to develop on this dynamic space. There were three dimensions to this interactivity: *Communication using Scrolls*, *initiation of conversations* and further deepening of communications (*Level of Conversations*). These dimensions cannot be compartmentalised as elements of each may be interlinked to one another. They are next for consideration.

### Communication Using *Scrolls*

At the outset, as indicated previously, a FF sent a *scroll* to a CS. It comprised of texts, pictures, videos and interactive tools as detailed earlier. Initial communication originated from the construction of a *scroll*, a FF understanding it and sending it to a CS who was notified of the process by e-mail. The interplay of communication between an external agent who prepared each *scroll* and the FF who then 'owned' it before sending to the CS made this a unique space, as seen in Fig 7.2 below. The externally pointed arrows indicate the increase in the number of *Scrolls*, while the internally pointed arrow shows the flow of communication from the external agent through the FFs to the CSs. The depth of this dimension depends on the number of themes covered.

**Fig 7 2 Dimensions of Interactivity between Cybersouls and Faithfriends**



**Initiation of Conversations**

Once the CS received notification of a new *scroll*, she/he logged in, read the content, reflected on it and responded to the questions or suggestions. The initial communication from a FF was considered complete only when the CS replied with a textual conversation at the specified location in the *scroll*. This added a second dimension as there was more than one opportunity for initiating conversations within a *scroll*, depending on its versatility. Again, regarding conversations an externally pointed arrow indicates the increase in the number of conversations, with the inward pointing arrow indicating the dialogical process between the duo of a CS and a FF. At times, a particular *scroll* was concluded with limited conversations and the pair proceeded to the next one, covering a great number of *Scrolls*. In such instances, however, the quality of the dialogue might have suffered.



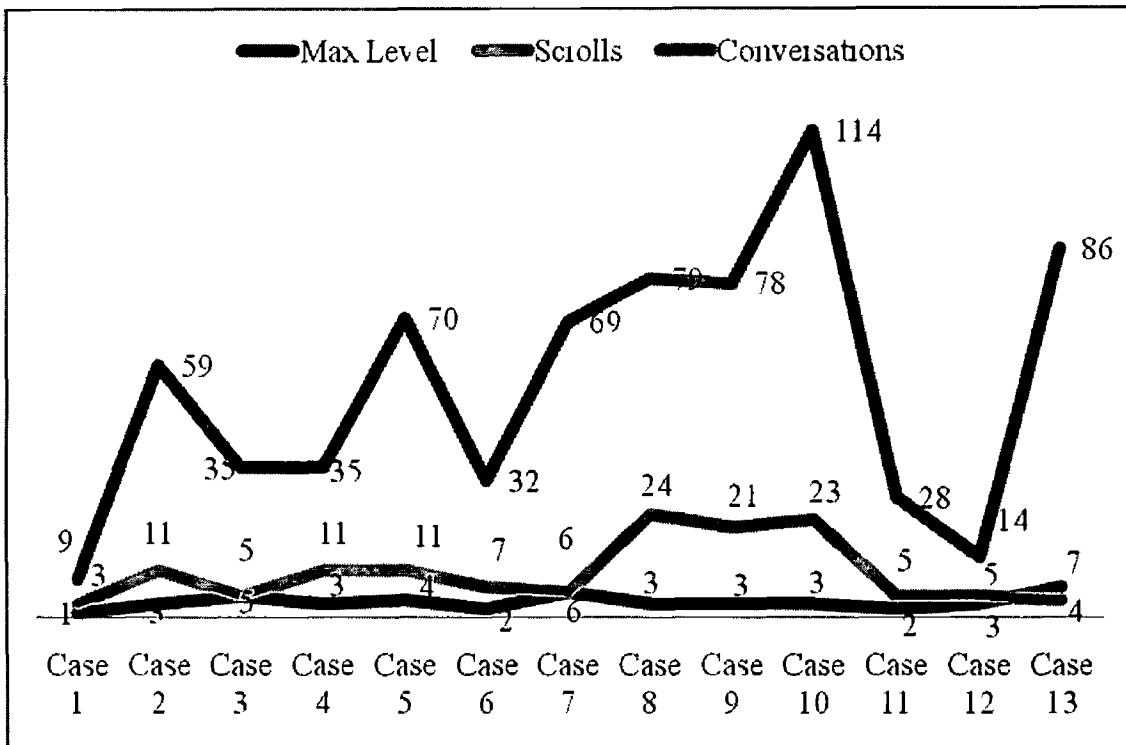
## Level of Conversations

Communication deepened when the FF replied to the previous message and the conversation was reciprocated as often as the participants wished at a particular point in the *scroll*. Silverman (2001) identified this process as 'adjacency pairs'. Once again, the external arrow in Fig 7.2 relating to level of conversations indicates the number of times the conversations were reciprocated, while the internal arrow shows the reciprocity of the dialogue. The greater the number of adjacency pairs, the greater the opportunity for more reflection, dialogue and deepening of interiority. All of this took place within the closed space created by the interaction of the minds of two participants around one strand of a topic originating from the *scroll*.

Six prescribed themes were covered within the 24 *Scrolls*. The conversations initiated by a CS and a FF, which were their own interpretations on the content of *Scrolls*, showed their capacity to reflect, their engagement with the topic and their interest in accompanying the other party. The level of conversations indicated the depth of dialogue and interactivity. In addition, it provided a space for creativity and dynamic contributions. This upholds the qualitative dimension of evangelisation as discussed in chapter 2 (Paul VI, 1975b).

Fig 7.3 below captures the virtual reality of the interactive landscape which appeared in the *Cybersouls* portal.

**Fig 7.3 Interactive Landscape in Cybersouls Portal**



In this figure, the middle line depicts the number of *Scrolls* completed in each case. The maximum level of conversations reached in each case is shown in the bottom line, while the top line presents the actual number of conversations completed in each case. A considerable amount of information was processed during the completion of the overall total of 136 *Scrolls*, with 708 conversations developing between the 13 CSs and their corresponding FFs. The adjacency pairs or level of conversations varied from one to seven, indicating deep reflection and sharing of ideas by some participants. Only one case did not progress beyond level one, while two others reached level two. Another six cases stayed at level 3 and the remaining of four cases increased their level of interactivity achieving levels between 4 and 7. An abbreviated example of this interactive process shows how the levels of conversation developed.

The conversation between FF Sycamore and CS Swallow in Case 7 commenced when the FF initiated the discussion with an introduction to the *scroll* on the topic of Faith Using the content of the *scroll*, the conversations progressed through various levels

Level 1 { FF Sycamore Dear Swallow, I feel faith is everything we have It  
is what we cling to in tough times and in the good times also  
What is Faith?  
(Content of Scroll)  
What do you think about the above statements?  
CS Swallow These statements are profound and require a lot of  
consideration

Level 2 { FF Sycamore Faith is our only way to Heaven and prayer is our faith  
in action Faith gives us tremendous Hope  
CS Swallow I like the way you have structured this and it is very  
reassuring

Level 3 { FF Sycamore That is great to hear I am so happy you found it  
helpful I find at times when our faith is tested it is harder but staying  
with Adoration increases the love of God in our daily lives  
CS Swallow I agree that the tests open us up spiritually and that the  
Holy Spirit becomes more powerful within us Sometimes this is  
just so hard I am sorry to hear of your

Level 4 { FF Sycamore Thank you so much Swallow, I have come a long way since and have a new life now and I am Blessed with so many many christian friends and of course my faith in God has increased so much from this heavy cross and  
CS Swallow I was thinking the same thing recently If it wasn't for the cross then our faith would not have been deepened

Level 5 { FF Sycamore I understand this so much as I have been there myself with my cross in life Always remember God is with you

While the conversations relating to this part of the *scroll* ended here at level 5, at another location on the same *scroll* the discussion between CS Swallow and FF Sycamore proceeded to level 6 This is just one example of the rigorous interactive process which took place in the dynamic space of the *Cybersouls* portal Examples of specific conversations cited in the next section show how intense and diverse the reflection which occurred could become

#### ***d) Consciousness Connected***

*Conscious Reflection* Drawing on de Chardin's (1960) work, the Internet is viewed as a space which connects human consciousness in a way that leads to a collective reflection This is discussed in the literature review (chapter 2) as a firm foundation on which this research was built The dynamic space of connectivity was identified in the above interactive landscape There is evidence of conscious and collective reflection taking place in the conversation which now follows

I am having some problems, I mean when I try to be holy then some sort of force is coming to me and would make do some sin This is what happening for the past couple of years And this won't last, Lord will pull me back

(CS Pigeon, Case 10)

This CS mentioned that 'over the past couple of years' he became aware of a particular experience He reflected on his own action and, using the *scroll* sent by his FF, was trying to communicate with him He noticed a pattern about his life which he could reflect on, comprehend and articulate

A slight difference is discernible in a longer reflection, abbreviated below

Another thing that came to my mind is about the change of dependancy [sic] as we grow up Initially as kids its basically security and they depend on their parents for that and as time passes it becomes dependancy [sic] on friends who are our peers for friendship and support At a certain period of time the search will be not only for friendship but also for emotional support a well

This can in turn develop as relationships (CS Eagle, Case 2)

Initially he reflected on childhood needs and on his own childhood Then he recollected changes over time observed in his own life This is a good example of deep and coherent reflection taking place on the *Cybersouls* portal The following reflection from Case 5 endorses this point

One of the biggest suffering sent to me was the death of my brother it seemed so pointless, he loved life My brother accepted his death and tried to make it easier for his siblings, telling us he was not afraid and that everything would be

alright Have never written any of this down before so I feel quite upset now  
maybe its good to do (CS Heron, Case 5)

It is interesting to note that CS Heron wrote about this very intimate and upsetting experience for the first time in *Cybersouls* A range of words and phrases used by other participants such as 'I think', 'I mean', 'I often think, 'I understand', 'what comes to my mind' indicated the inclusion of an element of reflection when addressing a particular topic They retrospectively thought about their own reality and reflected on it

A similar reflective process was identified also in the conversations of FFs, e g

Yes I think it hits us all when we think deeply on it I know for myself I find it so much easier to bear now as I am so into the faith but for a time in my life when I was luke-warm [sic] some years back I would have to say this statement is so real but now I feel I am growing more and more each day and it is a wonderful journey of a soul that wants and yearns to see my Lord (FF Sycamore, Case 7)

This sensitive piece is a vivid example of the reflective process in operation The same FF also recalled her personal growth and the change that faith made to her life, articulating it clearly in other conversations Her reflections were on her personal page of the *Cybersouls* portal, available for revisiting at any time

A reflection from another FF contributed to the discussion of faith in a *scroll*

I think Faith, in fact, is something that we practice every day in our lives And we've exercised it from the very moment we were born I suppose it's true that your mother even encouraged you to feel that we could trust her when we lay in

her arms And we learned day by day that was true, she would not drop us, that she was reliable, and we could put our faith in her arms (FF Fig, Case 5)

These examples directly address a crucial research question How can the information shared online influence the consciousness of young people to inform their understanding of faith? Their capacity for recollection, comprehension, reflection and contributing to the discussion were evident in the examples cited above How was this achieved? The influence of FFs, their probing questions, together with the questions posed in the *Scrolls*, seemed to prime this process The discernible interest displayed by CSs was another contributing factor

#### *A collective reflection*

As explained previously, the space was an interactive and dynamic space between two participants a CS and a FF The reflection which took place in the *Cybersouls* portal was not confined to their private spaces Rather, it occurred in the three dimensional dynamic landscape created at the interactive space between a CS and a FF

Communal reflective action also occurred in this online site The *Scrolls*, which were carefully prepared catechetical topics, acted as a shared foundation for discussions between the participants Thus, within the cases under review, it was possible to have up to 26 different responses to the same topic when a particular *scroll* was shared by each of the 13 cases An autocoding conducted in NVivo (according to caption of *Scrolls* and the name of the *Cybersouls*) gives the completion rate of *Scrolls* by case, in descending order, as set out in Table 7.2 below

**Table 7 2 Completion Rate of *Scrolls* within 13 Cases**

<b>Caption of <i>Scrolls</i></b>	<b>Cases</b>
Introduction - Part 1	12
Suffering The Problem of Suffering - Part 1	12
Introduction Knowing about Your Faith - Part 3	10
Introduction A Prayer to Begin With - Part 2	9
Happiness Expressions of Happiness and Its Yearning - Part 1	8
Introduction Please tell me more - Part 4	8
Suffering Embracing Healthy Change - Meditation - Part 4	7
Suffering Suffering is not in Vain - Part 3	7
Happiness True Happiness - Part 2	7
Suffering Why Suffering? - Part 2	7
Happiness Be Joyful, cos God loved you - meditation - Part 4	6
Happiness What can offer you real happiness? - Part 3	6
Faith What is Faith? - Part 1	5
Sacraments An Old Mug - Part 1	4
Faith How can we talk about faith? - Part 2	4
Faith How did you come into your faith? - Part 3	4
Prayer Healing Prayer - Part 4	3
Faith How can we grow in faith? - part 4	3
Prayer What happens in prayer? - part 2	3
Prayer What is prayer? - Part 1	3
Prayer Why do I not pray? - part 3	3
Sacraments Celebrations of Important Moments in Life - Part 2	2
Sacraments Sacred Moments in Life - Sacraments - Part 3	2
Sacraments The Man who Climbed on the Sycamore Tree - Part 4	1

For instance, it can be seen that two *Scrolls* were each completed in 12 of the 13 cases. This meant that, in these two *Scrolls*, the same catechetical topic was shared by 24 participants (13 CSs and 11 FFs), all of whom read these *Scrolls*, reflected on the material, responded and continued conversations around them. Here the minds of 24 participants were connected to the same thought material. This constituted a collective reflection which happened in private spaces because the communication within a case was not available to participants of other cases. This was to protect the confidentiality of discussions. The possibility of opening up the discussion on a particular topic to other participants might be considered as a suggestion for the future. Then this collective reflection, occurring in an open space, could increase the



sense of community. Another possibility is the tagging of a topic which might help collective reflection and provide mutual support.

In the above discussions it emerged that the fluency of communication of the participants and their emotions and gestures rendered the human communications in virtual space similar to that in real life. Instances of interactivity, trust and relationship made it a relational and dialogical space. The creation of a dynamic interactive space and the examples of deep and collective reflection established that the convergence of consciousness is a possible outcome when using the Internet. It became clear that, in an online interaction, there might be more opportunity to 'talk' directly to the brain, without the distractions of the senses. There might be more clarity of thought, since the conversations had to be written in an intelligible language. Reflections on a communicated matter gave rise to further questions. Since all the communications are retained and can be retrieved, clarifications could be made promptly. It is submitted that all of these aspects of communication contribute to making virtual communication tangibly real.

#### **7.4 Evangelisation in Cyberspace**

"The media can cross walls and be secretly present touching the hearts of those who are seeking" (Babin, 1991, p. 202). It was seen in the previous section that the hominisation of the *Cybersouls* project made it an effective space where the Church might connect constructively with the minds of youth. FFs interacting with CSs in this dynamic space of interactivity, where the minds of these people came together, was seen as an infrastructure on which the Kingdom of God might be built. Findings showed that the interactive space of an

intense togetherness of minds is possible to achieve online, as argued earlier in the literature review

In this section, the data obtained in the project examines how spreading the Good News is possible in Cyberspace. Various activities undertaken in the *Cybersouls* project were analysed to see how this intended evangelisation process worked out in practice. The preparations for initiating faith development - a moment of evangelisation - which took place in the *Cybersouls* portal, are reviewed. Considering the various 'moments of evangelisation' (Paul VI, 1975b, John Paul II, 1979) developed over the years in the Church, to what extent was the Internet useful as a tool in continuing this task?

### ***Faith Education Online***

The possibility of accomplishing faith education as one of the 'moments of evangelisation' (Paul VI, 1975b) was discussed earlier in chapter 2. It was discovered that some dimensions of evangelisation can be performed in spaces other than actual corporeal human communities. Thus, in this project, the evangelising of youth was envisaged as taking place in the *Cybersouls* portal through faith education, coupled with online accompaniment. Two areas of the research help to understand how this was achieved.

*Content of Scrolls* These contained the catechetical material shared by FFs with their CSs. *Scrolls* provided the spiritual wisdom of the Church in a tangible way through the Internet, creating this opportunity for a new evangelisation.

*Usage of Scrolls* Here, data relating to the interactions which developed around the spiritual themes shared by CSs and their FFs in the *Scrolls* is considered.

Each one is now considered in sequence.

### *Content of Scrolls*

During the construction of the *Scrolls* it was ensured that the content was Catholic and contained language that 'spoke' to the culture of youth.

### Resources Used

The catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC, 1994) as the official teaching of the Church, Scripture as the foundation of Christian living and the teachings of saints, augmented with general relevant stories as lived examples of these teachings, were used to build narratives in *Scrolls* which were both interesting and of good quality. Some examples will clarify this:

**Quote used from CCC:** "Prayer is "a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God (CCC, para. 2558)" (*Scroll 17: What is prayer?*).

### **Teachings of the Saints:**

If God did punish us for our sins always – this world would not exist because our sins are massive and grave. If God did not grant material goods to some of those who pray, it shows that these temporal blessings are not his concern. When he gives prosperity to some people it is not prosperity but his love that is to be considered important (Augustine, *City of God*).

(*Scroll 7: Suffering is not in vain*).

**Use of Scripture:** "Read Matthew 5:3-10 or watch the above video on beatitudes and match the following: . . ." (*Scroll 11: What can offer you real happiness?*).

The preparation of the *Scrolls* was the starting point of assimilating the wisdom of the Catholic way of life in a digital format

### Character and Language of the Content

The construction of the *Scrolls* started with four short introductory *Scrolls* framed with the purpose of initiating accompaniment on the journey in faith development, and imbibing a spirit of knowing and praying for each other. The first major *Scrolls* addressed universal human conditions such as happiness and suffering. This approach was inspired by young people who were asked to raise questions to be addressed and published in the blog <https://faithfriend.wordpress.com>, everyday in Lent 2010. “Why are there so many people suffering in the world while others are enjoying a great life?”, was a question asked by a young person in the parish. This approach ensured that the language and content of the *Scrolls* resonated with young people and addressed questions raised by them (John Paul II, 1979). An example of the language used now follows.

The theme of accompaniment of a FF was conveyed in an introductory *scroll*

I thank God for giving me a Faith Friend who will accompany me in my journey of Faith online. I pray that [name of the Faith Friend] be rewarded by the Lord for her/his support and prayer for me. Amen

(*Scroll 2* A Prayer to Begin With)

A prayer was included in the second *scroll* requesting that the accompaniment would proceed in a spiritual climate from the outset.

Considerable care was taken to ensure that the resources used to prepare the content of *Scrolls* were imbued from the wisdom of the Church and that the language used to write them connected with the culture of youth (Dulles, 2006) The next step involved the digitisation of the *Scrolls*, as detailed earlier in the section on the dynamics of online interaction Twenty four *Scrolls* were prepared, digitised and made available to each FF who read each *scroll* and wrote an introduction before sending it to the assigned CS FFs used these *Scrolls* to proclaim the Good News to their CSs Various elements of the usage of the *Scrolls* by both FFs and CSs show how the *Cybersouls* space became a spiritual space

### *Usage of Scrolls*

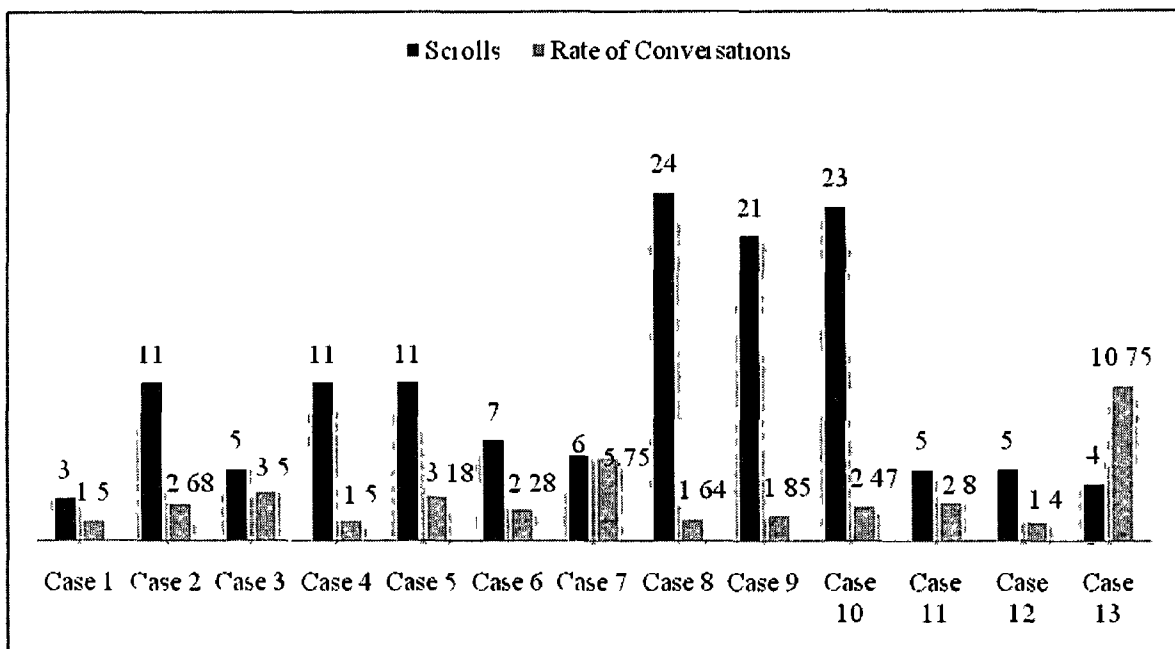
The question of how the Church can make use of technology to *reach out* to youth in their new socialising spaces is addressed in this section The previous section, dealing with the content of *Scrolls*, showed how the Good News was presented to CSs, whereas how this was dealt with by the participants is considered here The usage of *Scrolls* by both CSs and FFs revealed how the participants responded to the message of Christ online

### Spiritual Discussions

Signs of spiritual discussions were obvious in the quantification of the conversations and words shared between the CSs and their FFs In general, when two conversations were reciprocated in a *scroll* between a CS and a FF, this could be equated with one completed instance of communication For example, if a *scroll* was completed between a CS and an FF

involving two conversations (one each) attached to a *scroll*, the rate of completion of conversations<sup>12</sup> in that *scroll* was one Chapter 3 on Internet Communication described the interaction model of communication occurring when a communication is reciprocated between two parties (Pearson and Nelson, 2000) A quantitative measure of this interactivity shows that sufficient conversations have been reciprocated, reflecting the characteristics of an interactive model Fig 7 4 below shows the rate of completion of conversations between a CS and a FF, together with the number of *Scrolls* completed in each case

**Fig 7 4 Average Rate of Completion of Conversations between Cases**



In all the cases depicted in this Figure, the average rate of completion of conversations exceeded one This means that more than two conversations were initiated between the two participants on a particular *scroll* In general this is indicative of a satisfactory level of

<sup>12</sup> The average rate of completion of conversations is obtained by dividing the rate of conversations in a case by the number of participants For example in Case 1 there were three scrolls and nine conversations Therefore the rate of *completion* of conversation was  $9/(3*2) = 1.5$  i.e., the total number of conversations completed in a case divided by the number of scrolls, times the number of participants

discussion being attached to a *scroll*. As can be seen in Fig 7.4, there are five cases where the completion rate is between one and two. Another four averaged between two and three per *scroll*, a further duo completed between three and four conversations, while the remaining two reached an average of more than five conversations in a *scroll*. This quantitative representation of an overall commendable level of interaction is augmented with more specific examples which confirm the presence of in-depth discussions.

Following the four introductory *Scrolls*, five main topics were covered in the remaining 20 *Scrolls*: Suffering, Happiness, Faith, Prayer and Sacraments. Both CSs and their FFs took part in the discussions on the themes covered in the *Scrolls*. In addition, in some cases, tangents of the themes arose, increasing the depth of dialogue. An example of a conversation in the introductory *scroll* is

Dear Owl, *Welcome* to this great venture. I am Olive, living and working in . . . I really appreciate your interest in *deepening your faith*. May the Holy Spirit lead us to the ultimate source of all wisdom, knowledge and love. *Let's start our online faith journey here*. Olive

(FF Olive, Case 8, *Scroll 1* Introduction)

This is an introduction to the first *scroll* sent by FF Olive to her CS Owl. The FF seemed to have a clear understanding of the concept of the *Cybersouls* portal. The phrase *deepening your faith* captured the intention of faith development. The small prayer in the message made it a spiritual space. A welcome statement and the spirit of initiation of accompaniment were evident in this conversation.

In Case 9, (which had the same FF, Olive), the effort made to get to know one another

confirmed the introductory nature of the conversation

CS Peacock “Thank you dear Olive, I will also keep you and your family in my prayers I am living n working in I live with my God bless you always ”

FF Olive “I am from

CS Peacock “I am from (Case 9, Conversations, *Scroll 1* Introduction)

A conversation on the theme of suffering provides further insights on the nature of the discussions on the *Cybersouls* portal

Oak Dear Ostrich, This topic is a hard one, but I think we can both prayerfully write our thoughts on suffering I look forward to hearing from you! God bless you! (FF Oak, Case 6, *Scroll 5* Suffering)

This was the introduction provided by FF Oak to that particular *scroll* These two participants had already introduced themselves to each other in the introductory *Scrolls* and conversations FF Oak commented on how hard the topic was and invited her CS to reply Having read the *scroll*, her CS addressed the question “Do you want to share any personal experience of suffering?” (*Scroll 5*) as follows

When I was ten years old I experiencesd [sic] war in my country, it lasted for 4 years I experienced hunger, loss, fear at that time I was angry with God and questioning him why we have to go through all this sufferings, now I am grateful for everything that happened It showed me new dimension in life and strenghtened [sic] my faith (CS Ostrich, Case 6)

This personal experience of suffering in this CS’s life was closely connected to the theme of suffering The following is an extract from her FF Oak’s reply which also included a personal



experience of suffering, showing empathy with her.

Wow! What a beautiful way you have taken suffering in your life! I too have experienced some suffering in my life - about a year ago I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, but through that time, I was really able to experience God's grace in my life . . . and also was able to connect with all others suffering . . .

(FF Oak, Case 6)

This discussion on suffering was initiated by the FF. Her CS, having read the content of the *scroll*, replied to the questions asked and the discussion continued. It took a personal slant, also covering how one can learn from suffering. In the course of their conversations they discussed the cause of suffering and its prevalence in the world. They reached an altruistic reflection on the topic, thinking how it helped them to understand other people who suffered, in the light of the sufferings of Jesus. Supporting one another through prayers, they concluded the discussion with the last *scroll* on this theme, an audio/video meditation on healing through the Eucharist. This is an example of a discussion on a fundamental human and Christian theme which took place between a FF and her CS.

Another example of reflection on a different theme confirms that discussions which can pierce the human consciousness took place on the *Cybersouls* portal. In comparison with the previous case, this was a longer discussion and parts of the conversations which occurred in relation to two *Scrolls* are cited in order to understand how deep the discussions can be on a particular topic.

In Case 10, FF Palm introduced this new set of *Scrolls* on the theme of happiness. While there were four *Scrolls* on happiness, the focus here is on the first and the final one.

FF Palm Dear Pigeon, In one of your previous *scrolls* you mentioned that all the others around you are enjoying the life How do you define a happy life?

(FF Palm, Case 10)

The introduction had three more lines with a quotation as a motto and prayer The *scroll* continued, posing the following question to the CS “Do you agree that every moment of our life is a pursuit of happiness?” The CS Pigeon replied to his FF, addressing this question very personally

CS Pigeon Yes , I create happiness inside me so others see me as a happy person same with almost everyone who is around me, I am person who doesnt have a good house, even doesnt have a toilet, how could I enjoy my life Others think I am so happy I create happiness

FF Palm Yes Pigeon I know you create happiness around the people whom do you meet every day At the same time you need to make sure that Christ is being formed in the other person Only he can give the long lasting happiness

(CS Pigeon and FF Palm, Case 10)

Notice the reply of FF Palm where he connects with the previous response of his CS and Pigeon tries to speak about Christ there The *scroll* material continued and his CS responded to it The conversation proceeded, being reciprocated between them, and the CS shared an issue with which he was struggling The continuity of conversations is an indication of how young people can develop trust online and seek support through spaces such as these

CS Pigeon Today I don't find happiness in money or any other thing I want see and experience [sic] happiness from my soul A pure soul free from all addictions

FF Palm Good thought for the day may be for the moment It would be great if you continue in this thought for the next few hours

CS Pigeon As an adult I do struggle my heart is always seeking , So I will seek in others make me so happy for a day I agree the fact if I am truly into a relation with God then, the things won't [sic] matter me even great saints had some problems St Paul [sic] have one area he really struggled so I have one dark room

FF Palm Pigeon Please see the following videos I really appreciate your openness St Paul and other saints might have got some struggle in their spiritual life But they were always trying to come out from that They did not keep any dark room in their life But sometimes we do A lazy mind is devil's workshop If you cannot see the videos please type [sic] in youtube

CS Pigeon ohhh please I don't ever rate myself with saints I mean all the people with flesh have some sort of addiction Today I am back into my business, this is a cool video I am struggling and I need someone who is helping me to come out of this, knew the solution that I have to spend more time with Lord

(CS Pigeon and FF Palm, Case 10)

The discussion on happiness in the first *scroll* ended here and FF Palm sent another two *Scrolls* on the same theme. The conversations of his CS Pigeon seemed very personal, offering opinions about the topic, seeking directions about personal issues, asking for clarification about the conversations etc. The FF tried to give guidance and provided some thoughtful discussions and his CS responded to them. Then FF Palm sent the last *scroll* on happiness which is an audio/video meditation prepared for the *Cybersouls* website entitled 'Walking with Jesus'. He used the following introduction

FF Palm Dear Pigeon, When I listened to the meditation, I could feel the warmth of Christ's Love who was standing beside me when I did the meditation. Jesus is the only person who knows me inside out and could love me in the way I am

(FF Palm, Case 10)

CS Pigeon meditated on it and commented positively on the video. It is amazing how a video posted on Youtube can have a profound influence on people. Then the discussion continued with some suggestions from his FF. CS Pigeon reflected on his desire for change. These were articulated clearly. He said that the problem he faced was a problem shared by many young people of his age.

CS Pigeon truly an amazing one, this reminds me a true hope for my future. I am afraid for the life at the moment, going through some sort of difficulties. This video reminds me, whether am I walking with Lord in my difficult situations this lead into a situation whenever I [was] in trouble, [I will] be with Christ and offer him my weakness, this make a happy [sic]. So I would say I am walking with Christ and when time comes I will get His blessings amen.

FF Palm You still amaze me Pigeon, When I read all your posts here, I wonder how much inspiring your thoughts are Sometimes I think you are too spiritual, but at some other time I think you are not I gave the retreat talk from to Its really worth Please copy that in a stick and try to listen when you go to

CS Pigeon I am having some problems, I mean when I try to be holy then some sort of force is coming to me and would make do some sin And this wont last Lord will pull me back, My sins create a distance between me and God but He is coming again and again so this make my life more interesting

FF Palm I will fight the fight and press on towards the Goal

(CS Pigeon and FF Palm, Case 10)

This is a classic example which shows how two people can initiate deep spiritual dialogue online In this discussion, CS Pigeon stands as a representative of many young people of similar age who want to lead a spiritual life but can be challenged in ways connected to certain developments in technology such as online pornography While the above discussion was centred on the topic of happiness, new tangents of dialogue emerged around it This young person's revelations were indicative of the support and accompaniment which young people require these days CS Pigeon's openness and desire for change were addressed by his FF Palm who referred him to a video from Youtube and asked him to listen to an audio retreat All these suggestions were proposed to the person in the same language, the language of the Internet and communication technology i e , a multimedia language (Castells, 2000)

This example of dialogue which took place in the *Cybersouls* website clearly demonstrates how this new ministry can communicate with, address relevant issues and influence the consciousness of youth. The discourse shows that in-depth discussions on faith can take place online, making it an intimately spiritual space.

## 7.5 Conclusion

An analysis of the 13 selected cases was the focus in this chapter. It commenced with an overview of various methods of analysis and detailed how they were applied in this study. Three main themes emerged from this initial process: the dynamics of online communication, the characteristics of virtual-human communication and evangelisation in Cyberspace. A detailed analysis of each theme was presented. The interactive tools were described and relevant data showed how the CSs relate positively to them. The section on communication in Cyberspace provided numerous examples to support the view that this is profoundly a human space. In the next section on evangelisation on the *Cybersouls* portal, an analysis of the data revealed the depth of discussion that developed around the material on the *Scrolls*, providing evidence that the kingdom of God can be disseminated effectively online. Therefore it can be concluded that, by presenting the Good News online in such a way as to influence their minds, the Church can reach out to youth in their new habitat of online networks.

Now that the in-depth analyses have been presented, a synthesis of the overall study, together with conclusions, are set out in the final chapter.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The main strands of the study are woven together in this concluding chapter. It commences with an overview of the total project. This is followed by a synthesis of the research findings, addressing the research questions identified relating to three main spheres of the study and summarising key findings. Next, suggestions for expanding the project are identified together with possible areas for future research. Some final reflections conclude the study.

#### **8.1 Overview of the Study**

This section consolidates the study, briefly recapitulating the overall research path. The opening chapter introduced the project, explaining the background to the enquiry. It set out the primary objective of the thesis and described its overall structure.

The research project can be divided into two main interrelated strands: the literature review and the fieldwork. The literature review was conducted to clarify the rationale underpinning the study, to develop research questions and to establish, at a theoretical level, the feasibility of carrying out the research. Then the fieldwork put the theory to the test.

The review of the literature focused on material relevant to three topics – evangelisation, the Internet and youth. This was in keeping with the broad objective of the research which set out to explore the possibility of using the Internet for the evangelisation of young people.

The chapter on evangelisation (chapter 2) explored this concept, establishing that it is a core element of the Catholic Church's mission. Later in the discussion, the teachings of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II in relation to evangelisation in the modern world were examined.

Communication on the Internet was reviewed in chapter 3. It commenced with a general overview of the concept before presenting an in-depth examination of Internet Communication. This included exploring the possibility of using the Internet for youth evangelisation.

In chapter 4, the focus was on young people. Various aspects of youth were examined including cyber-youth and the possibility of virtual evangelisation in the context of Web 2.0.

The fieldwork commenced with the design of the *Cybersouls* project. This was detailed in chapter 5 which concentrated on the specifications of the project, leading to its piloting and implementation. Also, data collection and case study selection were described. The findings from the online questionnaire were presented in chapter 6, together with case descriptions for the cohort of selected cases. Finally, a detailed qualitative analysis of data relating to a sample of 13 cases was presented in chapter 7.

## **8.2 Research Findings**

A synthesis of the research findings in this exploratory study is presented in this section. It will be recalled that the main research question was to test the efficacy of the online mentoring of young people (Cybersouls – CSs) by Faithfriends (FFs) intended to deepen their understanding, appreciation and appropriation of their faith tradition. The research findings revealed a positive outcome to the main research question, establishing that a web 2.0



environment can be developed effectively to accomplish online mentoring of young people by FFs

Reviewing the findings in more detail, at a quantitative level, it will be recalled that, in the first 100 days of its operation, the *Cybersouls* portal attracted 119 CSs who were accompanied and mentored by 35 authenticated and trained FFs

At a qualitative level, the detailed analysis of the interactions between the CSs in the 13 sample cases and their respective FFs provided evidence of the depth of the exchanges that could take place, as individual FFs mentored their particular CSs

In addition, the positive opinions of participants regarding the *Cybersouls* portal, obtained through the terminal questionnaire, endorsed the effectiveness of this online approach to evangelisation

Cumulatively, these findings confirmed that youth evangelisation can be achieved online by engaging FFs as mentors who accompany young people on their exploration and appropriation of faith. Other research questions also emerged in the course of the study. Relevant findings relating to these issues are next for consideration.

### ***Spheres of the Research and Related Research Findings***

Convergence of the spheres of the Church, youth and the Internet was achieved in the course of the research process. A review of additional research questions (a - 1) undertaken in chapter 6 identified these three main areas of the study in relation to specific research questions. As the three spheres are not mutually exclusive, the questions pertaining to each

sphere are interrelated Findings in relation to the three individual spheres and related research questions are now presented

### *The Church and Evangelisation*

It was established in the literature review that evangelisation is the primary and encompassing mission of the Church In more recent times, the importance of making use of the media for evangelisation was reiterated by Paul VI and John Paul II In this research, the concept of harnessing online communication to reach the youth of today emerged from the initial investigation The possibility of a personalised mode of virtual evangelisation of young people, envisaged in the theoretical phase, was put into effect The Internet, considered as an instrument of social communication by the Church, was identified as a very effective medium to accomplish a dialogical and constructivist model of evangelisation Young people, as leading characters of the virtual *areopagus* of cyberspace, were the main participants of evangelisation

The first three research questions (a/b/c) which relate to the sphere of the Church and evangelisation are

- (a) How can the Church make use of technology to reach out to the youth in their new habitats or socialising spaces?
- (b) What skills and tools would be needed by the Church in adapting to the new medium of the Internet?
- (c) Considering the various 'moments of evangelisation' developed over the years in the Church, to what extent is the Internet useful as a tool to continue this task?

The field work demonstrated that the Church has to adapt to a collaborative and constructivist model of using the Internet to underpin an effective approach to the evangelisation of young people. Collaboration between youth movements in the Church and religious educators with a digital outlook can initiate effective spaces of evangelisation online. The challenge to the Church is to take part in the core development of the Internet in order to initiate spaces of effective evangelisation. Considering various moments of evangelisation, catechesis or learning about the faith tradition, which is an essential part of evangelisation, can be achieved online.

As indicated previously, three teams collaborated to get the *Cybersouls* project underway – the evangelisation team, the web team and the youth team, demonstrating the crucial need for off-line and organisational inputs in order to achieve online effectiveness. The scope of each team is now recalled briefly, details being provided earlier in chapter 5. The evangelisation team had to undertake a number of tasks. It had to prepare faith development materials and authenticate FFs. Regarding the preparation of the material incorporated in the *Scrolls*, attention had to be given to their authentic content, i.e., catechism, scripture, teachings, traditions and application to life. The approach involved dynamic story-telling, using interactivity and multimedia, taking full advantage of the potential of Web 2.0. Sensitivity to contemporary youth culture had to be reflected in the language used, while design aspects such as layout, aesthetics and interactivity had to be addressed in a manner that engaged young people.

Turning to the web team, skills were needed to draft the specifications for the online site and then to design and develop it. Finally the tasks of the administrative team included authenticating FFs and managing them online. It can be concluded that the Church needs to

develop a collaborative approach to bring together the required resources in order to take part in the 'core development' of the Internet

### *The Internet and Communication*

Prefaced by a broad appraisal of communication, the earlier discussion on this topic then moved to consider communication, using the Internet as a means of social communication. The Internet was seen as providing an environment for developing relationships and offering an opportunity for accompaniment and mentoring. From a communications point of view also, the constructivist model was found to be effective in the process of evangelisation, facilitated by two way interactivity on the Internet. Cyberspace, as a space incorporating multimedia, has the potential to connect the minds of young people constructively.

The following three research questions related to the sphere of the Internet

- (d) What is the potential of the Internet as an environment for the evangelisation of young people?
- (e) How can the Internet empower young people as active participants in evangelisation using the Internet?
- (f) What are some of the pastoral and theological opportunities afforded by the Internet as a means of evangelisation?

The research confirmed the capacity of the Internet to create socialising spaces, making it a conducive environment for youth evangelisation. Building on the full potential of web 2.0, the proficiency of multimedia and social networking enhanced the effectiveness of evangelisation using this medium. This suggests that the capacity of the Internet for

incorporating multimedia needs to be exploited, recognising its efficacy for dialogue and interactivity. Digitising the Catholic materials relevant to the religious education of young people, creating multimedia (images, audios and videos) and utilising other online resources are ways of making use of the full potential of web 2.0. An image centered and interactive story telling methodology, enabling catechesis, to be adapted to the language of young people, can stimulate their interest, leading them to become creative and active participants in evangelisation. This online research afforded young people the opportunity to display their freedom-to-learn, resourcefulness and proficiency in cyberspace. Therefore it can be said that this digital empowerment of young people creates authentic pastoral and theological opportunities for evangelisation.

#### *Young People as Participants*

Some of the characteristics of modern youth were identified in chapter 4. These included having an innate curiosity and a desire to be active learners, rather than being told what to do (see Careaga, 2001). The high level of Internet usage by the younger generation (Elliot, 2010, Lenhart et al, 2010) suggests that it caters for some of these needs. Youth culture necessitates the adaptation of the Good News to the digital space. Introducing authorised FFs as mentors in the web 2.0 environment and allowing them to accompany young people on their journey of faith can constitute an effective means of evangelisation.

Two other research questions involved the sphere of youth

- (g) How can the freedom and digital ingenuity of a young person be a source of momentum for New Evangelisation?

(h) How can the information shared online influence the consciousness of young people to inform their understanding about faith?

Table 8 1 below provides a general picture of the activities undertaken by FFs and their CSs in this study

Table 8 1 Online Activities of FFs and CSs	
Faithfriends	Cybersouls
Reading <i>Scrolls</i>	Reading
Writing an appropriate introduction	Reflecting
Sending the <i>scroll</i> to the Cybersoul	Responding
Reviewing the response of the Cybersoul	Opinion sharing
Asking further questions for clarification	Addressing questions asked in the <i>scroll</i>
Addressing any issues raised by Cybersouls	Addressing questions asked by the Faithfriend
Answering any questions	Sharing issues regarding faith
Asking questions to develop the process of reflection	Asking for prayer and support
Concluding and sending new <i>scroll</i>	Clarifications
Sending reminders Contributions Greater in both quantity and quality - confirms their capacity for accompaniment	Contributions Quantitatively smaller but developing qualitatively

There seems to be a close link between the presence and efforts of FFs and the online activities of CSs. It may be said that the presence of a FF constituted a motivating factor for the CS to engage. Also the fluency of communication with their FFs seems to have influenced the conversations of CSs.

In addition to their ICT skills, understanding of youth and the faith tradition, some of the more specific factors relating to the functions of a FF that motivated a CS to take part in reflective activity were identified as follows

- 1 The frequency and regularity of the interaction of a FF is a key factor While moderating and observing the interactions on a daily basis, the researcher noted that, having communicated with the FF, the CS logged in daily or at times more frequently in anticipation of a reply from his/her FF

An analysis of the regularity of replies from a FF shows that, for the 13 cases analysed in depth, replies were more regular in five cases The frequency pattern showed that a quick reply increased the likelihood of conversations being reciprocated In contrast, when a FF failed to reply on a regular basis, deeper reflection was less likely to occur

- 2 The capacity of a FF to initiate communication and sustain it also seemed to influence the reflective process Acknowledgement, clarification, asking and addressing questions and expressing appreciation were some of the constructive approaches adopted by FFs in their interactions
- 3 Relationship and trust were important It was noted that, in cases where the conversation was very formal, the interaction failed to develop In contrast, when the FF was able to develop a relationship that at the same time respected boundaries, trust and interactivity thrived at both a quantitative and a qualitative level
- 4 Fluency in online communication is a factor which can help the flow of communication between two people Having the linguistic ability to express normal human situations may help the other person feel 'at home' This can be vital in developing a professional relationship, leading to deep communication, as was evidenced in some of the findings

- 5 The ability to develop conversations can be underpinned by the knowledge and wisdom of a FF. Creative thinking may be helpful in developing a theme when interacting with a CS.
- 6 Sharing the knowledge of faith, engaging in a dialogue of personal reflections on faith, making comparisons and clarifications, are all expected to increase the depth of one's interiority. This development was discernible in the case studies where FFs had to respond to a range of issues raised by their CSs.
- 7 Findings show that, together with their personal reflective stories, FFs referred to Christ as a friend, protector, guide, helper and companion. Also they used other explicitly theological terms to represent Christ. This may be interpreted as showing that FFs had a good understanding of their own role of accompaniment being focused on Christ.
- 8 A general respect for the other person was discernible on the part of FFs, being expressed in gentle queries and a sincere interest in their respective CSs. A general acceptance of boundaries between the communicators was evident in the exchanges between FFs and their CSs.

Cumulatively, these factors enabled FFs to have a positive influence in their interactions when mentoring individual young CSs. The careful selection and training of FFs ensured that they had the ability to act as effective mentors.



Taking a composite view of the research results relating to these spheres – the Church, young people and the Internet – some of the important factors emerged in the research are depicted in Fig 8 1 below

<b>Fig 8 1 Important Factors in the Research</b>			
<i>Spheres Involved</i>	The Church	The Internet	Young People
<i>Constituting Factor</i>	Evangelisation	Communication	Culture
<i>Goal</i>	<i>Communio</i>	Interaction	Empowerment
<i>Raw material</i>	The Good News	Instruments of Social Communication	Participants
<i>Method</i>	Incarnation	Dialogue	Accompamment
<i>Onus on</i>	Global Church	Core Web Developers	Young People
<i>Strength</i>	Youth Movements	Web 2 0	Freedom and Ingenuity
<i>Adaptation Material</i>	Catechesis	Multimedia	Minds of Young People
<i>In Practice</i>	Faithfriends	<i>Scrolls</i>	Cybersouls
A Qualitative Study of Youth Evangelisation on the Internet using <i>Cybersouls</i> Portal			
<i>Achievement</i>	Evangelisation in Cyberspace	Dynamics of Online Interaction	Virtual Communication

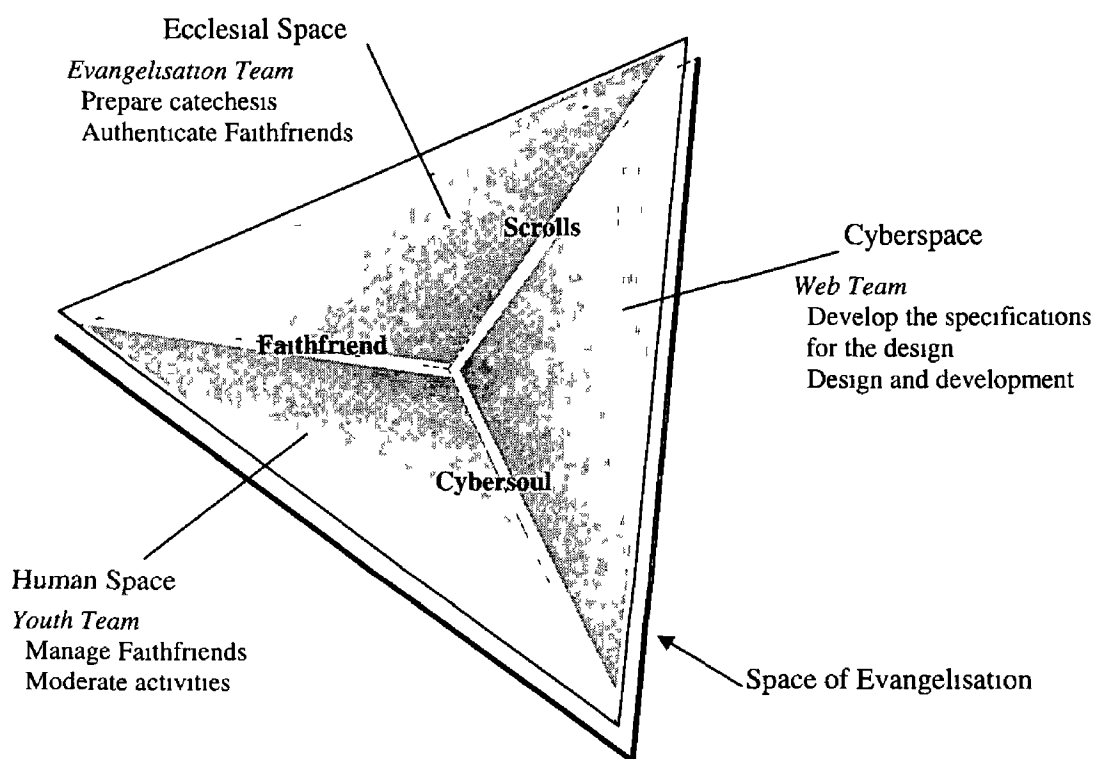
### ***Convergence of the Spheres***

The possibility of the convergence of these three spheres, the Church, youth and the Internet as envisaged in the literature review, was achieved in an effective manner. This gave rise to an important overarching research question, as set out below

- (i) The Internet provides the tools, the Church provides the atmosphere and young people are the participants. How can these seemingly distant cultural spaces be mutually inculturated?

In the theoretical discussions which preceded the fieldwork, the dynamic convergence of the spheres of the Church, youth and the Internet was proposed as a space for evangelisation. Then, moving on to the fieldwork, the *Cybersouls* project was developed to test the efficacy of the Internet as a tool for evangelisation. A thorough analysis of the data which emerged supports the thesis that the Internet can be used constructively for youth evangelisation. This achieved the main objective of the research which was to establish the potential role of the Internet as an instrument in the evangelisation of young people. Figure 8.2 below captures the overlay of the three spheres that emerged to construct this dynamic space of evangelisation.

**Fig 8.2 Convergence of the Three Spheres Forming the Space of Evangelisation**



The cyberspace of *Cybersouls* was creatively prepared with a view to making it a human space of accompaniment to facilitate discussions on matters of faith. Here, cyberspace, human space and ecclesial space merged to create a space of evangelisation. The preparation of *Scrolls* needed both the wisdom of the Church as well as knowledge of dynamic online

tools. The selection of FFs needed to assure their authenticity, maturity in faith and connectivity to youth. CSs are at the intersection between Cyberspace and human space. Thus the efficacy of an online environment of evangelisation is dependent on the calibre of the offline resources and organisational capacities that are utilised.

Setting up the online *Cybersouls* site and facilitating the registration of young people marked the starting point of this evangelisation for CSs. Then online FFs, authenticated by the coordinator, were effective in accompanying and mentoring these young souls who wanted to deepen their understanding of faith. Research findings showed that, using the dynamic catechetical material, termed *Scrolls*, to engage the CSs, FFs achieved a high level of success in this regard. The profound human space created between the interaction of the CSs and their FFs was enriched by the catechetical material on the *Scrolls*. The Good News seems to have permeated cyberspace where its wisdom resonated with the consciousness of young people through dialogue and prompted reflective thought.

Drawing together the evidence gathered in the course of this investigation, the key findings of the research can be summarised as follows:

- (i) Effective mentoring by a Faithfriend enhances the potential of the web 2.0 environment for youth evangelisation. Such effective mentoring depends on careful selection and training of Faithfriends, particularly their knowledge of the faith tradition, proficiency in ICT skills and understanding of youth culture.
- (ii) A collaborative and constructivist model of using the Internet underpins an effective approach to evangelisation with young people.

(iii) Making use of the full potential of web 2.0, the proficiency of multimedia and social networking enhances the effectiveness of online evangelisation

(iv) The efficacy of an online environment of evangelisation is dependent on the calibre of the offline resources and organisational capacities that are utilised

### **8.3 Suggestions for Expanding the Project**

In the light of the research conducted, some suggestions for expanding the project now follow

*Virtual Representation of Individuals* The participants in the *Cybersouls* website had individual 'web-pages' with their names on them. Unlike other social networking sites, their photos and other demographic details were not permitted to be displayed online in these profiles. Some participants may wish to provide and make available online of a more detailed profile

*Linkage to Offline Activities* More collective reflection could lead to the possibility of having offline meetings in groups. Also, specific offline activities could be arranged for online participants who reside in the same area. This would help to ensure the process of evangelisation as its sacramental elements could be catered for in the setting of a real life community

*Interest Groups* Allowing interest groups such as youth movements and parish youth groups to register is another suggestion for expansion. In addition, a code could be provided on the *Cybersouls* web portal to make this site part of their web presence

*Mobile Applications* Adapting the web portal of *Cybersouls* to the up to date browsing experience, by incorporating mobile applications, could be another way of expanding the project

*The Role of Faithfriends* Some issues regarding aspects of the role of FFs may need to be further considered

- The extent to which their role is confidential
- The question of addressing disclosures that may arise in the context of the legal obligations in a particular country and the Internet Law and Regulations?
- The conceptualisation of the role a FF - whether she or he is a spiritual director or merely a fellow traveller

#### **8 4 Possible Areas of Future Research**

This was an exploratory study, limited by both time constraints and personnel, being confined to one researcher. It is hoped, however, that having made a start in this innovative area of research, it will provide an impetus for further enquiry in this field. Possible topics for consideration are set out below

*Creating a Sense of Community* The possibility of opening up the discussion on a particular topic to other participants was a suggestion made in chapter 7. It is considered that this collective reflection, occurring in an open space, could increase the sense of community. Research exploring how relationships similar to real life relational ties in a community can be fostered in an online community would be beneficial in progressing this possibility

*Learning from One Another* The tagging of a topic or a discussion created by an individual might encourage collective reflection and provide mutual support. This could open up the possibility of learning from other participants. However, limitations would need to be placed on tagging, taking into account the sensitivity of a case, together with issues of confidentiality and privacy. The development of online peer support for faith education is another area of research for the future.

*Evangelisation Quantitative Dimensions* The research in this project was focussed primarily on a qualitative dimension of evangelisation. Testing quantitative aspects of evangelisation is another area which merits investigation. The need to cater for a larger number of CSs would require the selection and training of a greater number of FFs. Also it would necessitate the construction of more of the dynamic and interactive tools and resources appropriate to the expectations of young people. The development of additional suitable material for use in *Scrolls* constitutes another important research task.

*Moderation* A growth in the number of participants would involve identifying further resources for moderation of the website. Some of the activities of CSs and FFs can be automated. Automatic analysis of the words and phrases they use in their interactive spaces online can be a way of achieving this. CSs who have achieved a certain level of accomplishment online could be given more power to undertake some responsible tasks. Exploring these possibilities would involve additional research.

*Stages of Faith* Research is needed regarding how to deal with CSs at different stages of their faith development, as participants may vary from beginners to advanced. Preparing appropriate faith materials for each of these categories is another challenge in undertaking

online evangelisation. Appropriate research would provide useful insights into addressing this challenge.

*Religious Education and the Internet* This research established the robust general enthusiasm which young people have for the Internet and confirmed its specific potential for use by the Church as a means of youth evangelisation. These findings have implications for future developments in the wider field of religious education. Further research, investigating the possibilities afforded by the Internet in the arena of religious education, would make a valuable contribution to ensuring that online opportunities are incorporated and used to best advantage in this educational setting in the future.

## **8.5 Final Reflections**

The *Cybersouls* research project is an example of the Church being represented in the mosaic of the convergence of Web 2.0 in cyberspace. This has opened a window to the world of youth. The convergence of the faith of the Church and youth culture on the information super highway has brought together a complex mixture of various aspects of human existence. Initiating instances of interaction, as undertaken in the *Cybersouls* project, provided opportunities for evangelisation founded on understanding the characteristics of the phenomenon of online interaction. This addressed the research question “What would be involved in building on this information shared online in order to transform young people?” From the time of making the project available to young people online, their registration, login and use of the site, they were enabled to display the potential of the medium. The registration of a young person was a critical point of allowing individual participation in this project. Then, in their private living spaces, the participants were able to take part in the project.

without the constraints of any physical community around them. An expression of their freedom and power to communicate was visible here.

The detailed analysis of the data obtained in the *Cybersouls* website allowed the conversations to 'speak'. The tools of online communication and their capacity to facilitate interactivity made dynamic story telling possible in the language of young people who are active participants of this medium. The profound nature of this virtual human space became evident in some of their conversations. The depth of the discussions undertaken in this research proved its capacity for influencing human interiority to accomplish a qualitative dimension of evangelisation. The examples of dialogue which took place in the *Cybersouls* website revealed clearly how this new ministry can communicate with and influence the consciousness of youth. The ensuing discussions showed that in-depth dialogue on faith can take place in online spaces, making it an intimately spiritual space.

Evangelisation has been central to the mission of the Church since its inception. Over an extended time period, developments in the wider world, e.g., the invention of printing, have impacted on how the task of evangelisation has been addressed in different ages. In the contemporary world, the advent of the Internet provides yet another new means of spreading the Good News, especially to young people who have embraced this medium with such enthusiasm. This exploratory study has tested and established the efficacy of the Internet for the evangelisation of youth by engaging Faithfriends to mentor them in deepening their understanding, appreciation and appropriation of their faith tradition. "While acknowledging that "there is always a 'more' that goes infinitely beyond what we have already grasped" (Hought, 1986, p. 21), it is hoped that the insights provided in this research advance in some measure the engagement of young people in building the Kingdom of God in the years ahead.



## **APPENDICES**

Home page of the web portal [www.cybersouls.ie](http://www.cybersouls.ie)

### Welcome

Welcome to an online journey of faith!  
 This is a brand new concept of spiritual development for young adults. We offer Faithfriends to accompany you on your journey of faith online. Faithfriends are authorised by Jesus Youth, who will share interactive, exciting and inspirational materials to any person who wants to deepen the journey of faith. If you want to learn more about faith online, Register as a Cybersoul - a Faithfriend will accompany you. [Read More](#)



### Login

**Login Name/E-mail ID:**

**Password:**

Remember Me:

[Forgot Password?](#)

### CASTING OUT INTO THE DEEP!

"Behold, I am with you always, until the end of time" (Mt 28: 20)

This is a brand new concept of spiritual networking online - a new tool for accompanying young adults in their journey of faith online.

Faithfriends who are authorised by a Catholic youth movement, will accompany you if you want to deepen your journey of faith online.

Anybody over 18 is invited to register and sign to be accompanied by a Faithfriend in this online journey.



### The Project

The Project: Cybersouls is a project for young people. Its aim is to develop faith through online networking. It is designed to develop the faith of young people through their online interaction with Faithfriends. 'Cybersouls' is a term given to those who want to initiate their faith journey online while Faithfriends, primarily authorised by the Jesus Youth movement, would accompany Cybersouls on their journey. Here, either you are a Cybersoul or a Faithfriend.

### The Research

The Research: The project started as part of a PhD research in Mater Institute of Education, Dublin, Ireland. Fr Sony Sebastian, SMI, a research student of the Institute, is the principal investigator. The data obtained during the first six months of the project is expected to be used for the research. This is clearly mentioned in the registration process. [Read More](#)

### Youth questions

- [What is happiness?](#)
- [Where was God when he created those people who do not believe?](#)
- [Where are you going to do when you leave school?](#)
- [Does my conscience bother still trouble me?](#)
- [Why is it necessary to fight and argue about what we believe in?](#)

Jesus Youth



Mater Dei Institute



Archdiocese of Dublin



Home | Terms of Use | Privacy Statement

Registration form of FFs

**Cybersouls**  
Welcome to an online journey of faith!

[Home](#) | [About](#)

\* Register as a Faithful

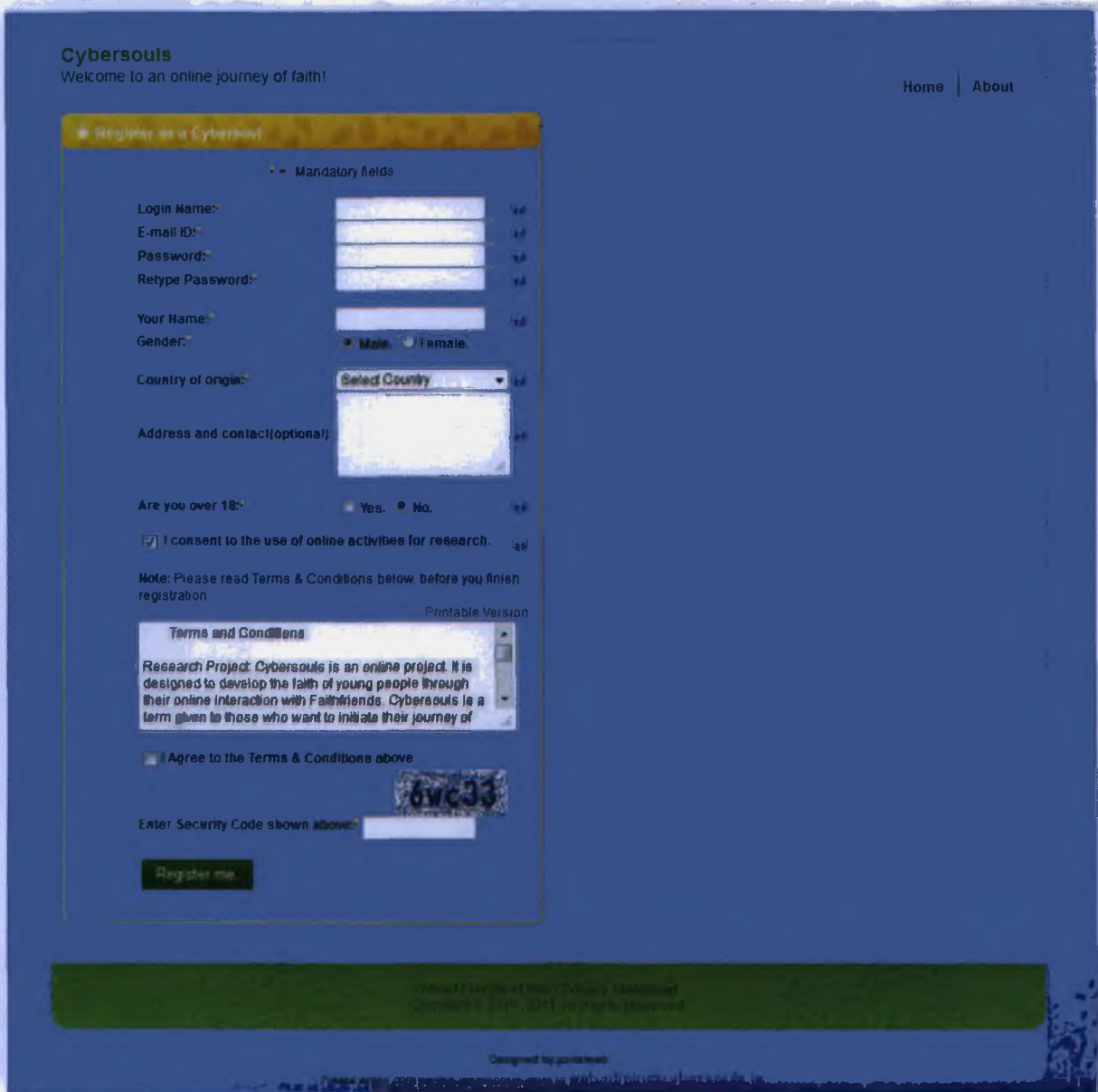
\* - Mandatory fields

Login Name:*	<input type="text"/>	(40)
E-mail ID:*	<input type="text"/>	(40)
Password:*	<input type="password"/>	(16)
Retype Password:*	<input type="password"/>	(16)
Your Name:*	<input type="text"/>	(50)
Gender:*	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female	
Date of birth:*	<input type="text" value="Month"/> <input type="text" value="Day"/> <input type="text" value="Year"/>	(10)
Country of origin:*	<input type="text" value="Select Country"/>	(40)
Present Address:*	<input style="height: 40px;" type="text"/>	(255)
Contact Phone: *	<input type="text"/>	(10)
<b>Present Parish Details</b> (1)		
Parish Name: *	<input type="text"/>	
Place of Parish:*	<input type="text"/>	
Country of Parish:*	<input type="text" value="Parish Country"/>	
Are you active in any youth movement: eg Jesus Youth, Youth 2000, YM C.A etc (Please specify)	<input type="text"/>	(255)
<b>Reference Person Details</b> (2)		
Name: *	<input type="text"/>	
Contact Tel. No.:	<input type="text"/>	
E-mail ID:	<input type="text"/>	
Designation: *	<input type="text"/>	
eg Youth Leader, Parish Priest, Co-ordinator e.t.c. (Please specify)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I consent to the use of online activities for research. (40)		
<p>Note: Please read Terms &amp; Conditions below, before you finish registration</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><a href="#">Printable Version</a></p> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Terms and Conditions</p> <p style="font-size: small;">Research Project: Cybersouls is an online project. It is designed to develop the faith of young people through their online interaction with Faithfuls. Cybersouls is a platform given to those who want to enhance their journey of</p> </div> <p style="margin-top: 5px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I Agree to the Terms &amp; Conditions above</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;"> </div> <p>Enter Security Code shown above: <input style="width: 80px;" type="text"/></p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"><input type="button" value="Register me"/></p>		

Designed by cybersouls

273

Registration Form of CSs




## Sample Scroll

**Why Suffering? – Part 2**

Suffering in the World

1 Instructions to Faithfulness

The discussion on suffering continues from previous scroll ...



Tears from within

**'Why is there suffering?'** is a very natural and crucial question puzzling us for centuries.

In general, sufferings are occasions which cause pain for us. In this life we constantly experience sufferings of many different kinds and size – physical and moral evils, illness, death, injustices, wars, natural disasters, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, etc.

Suffering is a human condition as much as it is the condition of all conscious living beings.

- ✚ If God, Father almighty, the creator of heaven and earth, cares for all his creatures, why does so much evil occur?
- ✚ Why are there so many people suffering in the world and why are others enjoying a great life? This, for human beings, is a mystery that often evokes the cry, "Why?"

The apostle Paul tried to answer this question, saying, "Death (suffering) came into the world through sin (Rom 5:12)."

What do you say about the opinion of St Paul?

Does that mean that all suffering is caused by sin? It is true that some suffering is caused by our actions. This, however, may not seem completely true in the case of people who suffer through no fault of their own.

A friend of mine said to me, "We have only a small vision, but God has the full picture." We may not be able to comprehend why God permits suffering for some people. Because of the complexity of the problem, there's no simple or quick answer.

**Natural Approach to Suffering – empirical or material approach**

Some people suffer because of material poverty or illness; others do not. In general, poverty is considered to be a cause of suffering. Ill-health in mind and body are examples of suffering. Therefore, this should mean that those who are wealthy and healthy don't suffer. But even those who seem to be enjoying a great time may also be suffering in a different way.

- ✚ Would wealth, health or other material goods bring happiness to us and enable us to say, "I will not suffer anymore?"
- ✚ Is it okay to say that suffering is not just for some people; that all people suffer one way or other?

Please write any of your questions or type your replies to the above questions here.

<b>Table 9 1 List of Scrolls</b>	
<b>Order of Scrolls</b>	<b>Name of Scrolls</b>
1	Introduction - Part 1
2	A Prayer to Begin With - Part 2
3	Knowing about Your Faith - Part 3
4	Please tell me more - Part 4
5	The Problem of Suffering - Part 1
6	Why Suffering? - Part 2
7	Suffering is not in Vain - Part 3
8	Embracing Healthy Change - Meditation - Part 4
9	Expressions of Happiness and Its Yearning - Part 1
10	True Happiness - Part 2
11	What can offer you real happiness? - Part 3
12	Be Joyful, cos God loved you - meditation - Part 4
13	What is Faith~ - Part 1
14	How can we talk about faith? - Part 2
15	How did you come into your faith~ - Part 3
16	How can we grow in faith? - part 4
17	What is prayer? - Part 1
18	What happens in prayer? - part 2
19	Why do I not pray? - part 3
20	Healing Prayer - Part 4
21	An Old Mug - Part 1
22	Celebrations of Important Moments in Life - Part 2
23	Sacred Moments in Life - Sacraments - Part 3
24	The Man who Climbed on the Sycamore Tree - Part 4

## Questionnaire Form

## Your views on 'Cybersouls' website please

As part of my research project I need to get your views on the Cybersouls website. So, kindly complete this short survey before Friday 15 October 2010. It will only take few minutes.

\* Required

**Taking part in the Cybersouls project has enlivened my faith. \***

Tick one of the options below

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

**I understand my Catholic faith better now. \***

Tick one of the options below

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

**My Faithfriend in Cybersouls website has helped me to deepen my faith. \***

Tick one of the options below

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

**The scrolls/themes in this website helped me to reflect seriously about my faith. \***

Tick one of the options below

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- agree
- strongly agree



Questionnaire Form

**I am closer to my parish/community because of the Cybersouls website .\***

Tick one of the options below

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

**I feel part of the online Cybersouls community. \***

Tick one of the options below

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

**I like interacting via social networking sites such as Facebook, Bebo, Orkut, Myspage etc. \***

Tick one of the options below

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

**I would recommend the Cybersouls website to a friend in order to deepen his/her faith. \***

Tick one of the options below

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

**If you have any additional comments to make about the Cybersouls website, kindly make them below. \***



Screen Shot of Coding of Themes (Tree Nodes) in NVivo

The screenshot shows the NVivo interface with the 'Tree Nodes' window open. The window displays a hierarchical tree of nodes and a corresponding table of coding results. The table has three columns: 'Name', 'Sources', and 'References'. The nodes are organized into three main sections: 'Themes CS', 'Themes FFA', and another unnamed section. The 'References' column shows the total number of references for each node, with some nodes having sub-nodes that sum up to a total of 302 references.

Name	Sources	References
Centric of scrolls	1	31
Cybercode according to scrolls	0	0
Cybercode interactions	0	0
Scrolls according to a Cybercode	0	0
scrolls completed	0	0
Themes CS	1	1
<b>Themes FFA</b>		
Characteristics of Virtual Communication	4	124
Dynamics of Online Interaction	4	139
General observations	3	78
Online Evangelist	14	147
Total conversations	2	108
<b>Themes CS</b>		
Characteristics of Virtual Communication	0	52
Dynamics of online interaction	6	100
Faithful interaction etc	1	11
Miscellaneous	1	4
Online Evangelist	5	26
Total conversations	0	302


**Table 9 2 Dynamic Tools Used for Interactivity and Conversation in *Scrolls***

Topics	Scroll	Text	Picture	Video	Comment box	Yes /no	Match the following	Choose from the list	Number of Conversation snippets
Intro	Scroll 1	x	x		x			x	2
Intro	Scroll 2	x	x		x				1
Intro	Scroll 3	x	x			x		x	3
Intro	Scroll 4	x	x		x	x			2
Suffering	Scroll 5	x	x		x				3
Suffering	Scroll 6	x	x		x				2
Suffering	Scroll 7	x	x		x				1
Suffering	Scroll 8	x	x	x	x				1
Happiness	Scroll 9	x	x		x	x			3
Happiness	Scroll 10	x	x	x	x				2
Happiness	Scroll 11	x	x	x	x		x		2
Happiness	Scroll 12	x	x	x	x				1
Faith	Scroll 13	x	x		x				2
Faith	Scroll 14	x	x		x	x			2
Faith	Scroll 15	x	x		x				1
Faith	Scroll 16	x	x	x	x				1
Prayer	Scroll 17	x	x		x				1
Prayer	Scroll 18	x	x		x				2
Prayer	Scroll 19	x	x		x				1
Prayer	Scroll 20	x	x	x	x				1
Sacraments	Scroll 21	x	x		x	x			3
Sacraments	Scroll 22	x	x		x		x		3
Sacraments	Scroll 23	x	x		x				1
Sacraments	Scroll 24	x	x		x				1
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	

Screen Shots of Interactions of Case 3

Case 3 - FF Cedar and CS Falcon. (Pseudonyms are used to protect confidentiality.)


Scroll 1



## Introduction - Part 1

[General Introduction](#)

Dear Falcon How are you? Welcome to this journey of faith online. I am very happy to journey with you online during this project. As I see it, this is a very new venture of journeying together on the Internet in order to understand, learn about and deepen our faith. Hope to get to know you more over the coming days. GOD Bless. Cedar



! Instructions to Faithfriend

How are you?

Welcome to this journey of faith online.

I am very happy to journey with you online during this project.

As I see it, this is a very new venture of journeying together on the Internet in order to understand, learn about and deepen our faith.

So that I can get to know you a little better, may I ask you some questions which you are free to answer?

In your opinion where do you stand in relation to your own journey of faith?

- Not started/I do not know
- A beginner
- Advanced
- Well advanced

May this journey begin by lighting the candle of faith. Post a similar prayer here.

Let this journey show us the true meaning of being devoted to Christ.

Thats wonderful. Sometimes before starting a journey it is always good to know where you are and where are we going. Don't you think so? Imagine going to a distant place, I am sure I would plan it out, the time required, fuel for the car, extra tyre etc. So that I can get to know you a little better, may I ask you some questions which you are free to answer? You have identified yourself as a beginner in this journey. What is the most important thing that motivates you know more about your faith? What would you expect as an outcome of this endeavour? Hope I don't sound very serious with the above, but feel free to ask me any questions and I will try my best to answer them. Let me know if there is anything specific that you would like me to pray for you. GOD Bless you.

Posted by FF Cedar

Hi again! I'm going to try my best to answer your questions honestly. The most important thing that motivates me to know more about my faith is the security it brings. That does seem selfish but I feel a certain protective shield around me because of my faith in Christ and going to church every Sunday. Interacting with my friends who might be less religious or maybe not religious at all. I appreciate that I have God to turn to, to talk to, and to pray to. While this shelter motivates me, I hope to also learn to become a good Christian for life and to practice the same beliefs that my parents taught me so well—that church is essential and God is always with us. As for what I expect from this endeavor, I hope to learn as much as I can and share as well. Sharing with someone I do not know and have never seen but still knowing that they only have good intentions for me gives a sense of comfort. I would like to apologize for not being so active thus far but I will try harder from now on. Thank you for sticking with me. I also have some questions for you that you can answer if you want. Where do you stand in your development of faith? And were you born into a Christian family or did you take the decision yourself? Hope this message is not too long.

Posted by CS Falcon

Hi, Thanks for your honest answer. Very soon you will find that GOD will reveal more of his goodness in your life. The word of GOD tells us that you have come to know Jesus because GOD the father has attracted you to him. If he has called you, then he certainly has a plan for you. This has pretty much been my experience. Although I was raised a christian, I came closer to GOD and my faith through an incident in my family and I believe is a miracle when everyone around had little expectation that my father would survive a bloody accident. Praise GOD that my father is completely healthy now. The faith journey that I had begun then has seen its ups and downs. But where I am now, I wouldn't have dreamt five or six years before. GOD has taken me through many situations which I know I am not at all capable of. I would say being in that relationship with my Jesus is a great treasure in my life. I laugh, cry, upset, pray with him. Do you cherish a one to one relationship with Jesus?

Posted by FF Cedar

## Case 3, Scroll 1 (cont'd)

I've always found myself talking in my mind about anything and everything. And I always felt that I was talking to God. There was never a doubt in my mind that was what I was doing. I feel like God can hear everything and God knows everything. I feel like this was the beginning of having a one to one relationship with Jesus. To me the lines between God and Jesus are blurry because I talk as if I'm speaking to both entities. I am glad to hear your father is happy and healthy. Actually just over a week ago, I was in a car accident with my brother--my very first car accident. Fortunately it was of no fault of mine and no one was seriously injured. But I can't help but replay the few seconds over and over. I swerved onto the opposite lane and crossed the road onto the grass on the other side. We were so blessed because there was no oncoming traffic and we were only feet away from crashing into an electricity pole. I praise Jesus everyday that my brother and I didn't get hurt. I know I wouldn't forgive myself if something had happened to my brother. I feel that God hands down infinitely more blessings than I deserve. Here's a link to a song that I really like. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ID\\_pCr\\_Xrnc&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ID_pCr_Xrnc&feature=related)

Posted by CS Falcon

The song's got a good caption. Is it just two of you in the family? Say hello to your brother for me please. Also I was thinking of taking on the next scroll which is to do with another topic of "suffering". Before that could you also share the area of faith that you would like to grow more. I am asking this because, for our faith to grow it is very important that we take that extra step out of our comfort zones. For example we may be comfortable in our current situation and happy to stay there as long you can. From the word of GOD we know that unless a mustard seed falls to the ground and dies, it cannot grow up (mat 13). From this parable Jesus teaches us about the death to our worldly things that we are attached to and grow up into heavenly things. So may be take a quite time to sit with Jesus and pray to holy spirit and he will reveal many things to you. If you have identified an area in your life that you would like GOD to intervene, may it be prayer, word of god, charity.. let me know and I will pray for you as your friend in faith.

Posted by FF Cedar

I have two brothers and both my parents. I'm not entirely sure what you mean by me sharing the area of faith that I would like to grow more. Could you please clarify? Also I would like God to intervene for me in my family life. I want all my family, nuclear and extended, to be safe and healthy. There are so many tragedies which take place everyday to countless people and I want to pray that my family may feel the least amount of pain possible. We have been blessed abundantly and I hope that the Lord continues to give us his great blessings and keep us in his hands.

Posted by CS Falcon

## Case 3, Scroll 1 (cont'd)


Hi again, sorry I took some time to come back. Almost all the people that I know talks about a call of GOD in their life. Many a time when someone has an encounter with christ, then they cannot sit still, they would want to spread that love and bring others to him. I am reminded the story of women who had many husbands, to whom Jesus asked for a drink. When she realised that Jesus was no ordinary person, she went and started talking about him to the entire village and inviting them to come and listen to him. Even after 2000 odd years of the death and resurrection of our lord, people are still facinated about their encounter with Jesus. This encounter with Jesus is infact a call that GOD the father is placing in the hearts of his children. The purpose of the call is because GOD wishes to reveal more of him to us and to grow in a relationship with us. And GOD has placed a similar call in your life too Falcon. Maybe it is a desire to know more about GOD through the scriptures, may it is some talent that you have, may be it is a desire to spend more time in prayer etc. This is what I meant by the area of falth. If you haven't really had such thoughts then it is a good idea to spend few minutes every day, asking GOD reveal more about his call in your life. Do let me know if you need more clarification.

Posted by FF Cedar

I think I'm understanding what you mean. But I cannot come up with an answer for where my area of falth is or what my call is. I feel like I will have to be introspective and also ask God what he has in mind for me. Thank you for your explanation. And also thank you for your prayer. I don't know exactly how this will proceed if I should ask a question or not. But I was curious on your views of non-Christians and life after death for them. I'm not sure if this has to be made into another scroll but if so, feel free.

Posted by CS Falcon

## Case 3, Scroll 2



## A Prayer to Begin With - Part 2

General Introduction


**Dear Falcon**

Now that we have a little understanding about each other, let us explore a bit more about our faith and other questions starting with the one you just raised. Lets say the following prayer

Lord Jesus, I thank you for the friendship that you had given us in your name. I ask for your holy spirit to hover over our communications and discussions, so that your wisdom and knowledge is shared and utilised for the glory of your kingdom. As we embark on this journey, I ask you to wash us and protect us with your precious blood, that you so generously shed in Calvary for us. Mother mary, we ask for your intercession, so that the Father's will is fulfilled in our lives as we embark this journey of faith. In Jesus name we pray Amen

I have said this prayer for you that this online journey which we are making together may be guided by the Holy Spirit. I will request you to say the same prayer that the same Holy Spirit may be our guide in this journey

**Prayer**



Lord Jesus, I ask your Holy Spirit to guide us both in this online journey of faith. May this online presence remind us that God's loving presence is very close to us because you have said, "Behold, I am with you, always, until the end of time" (Mt 28:20).

May we learn from the wisdom of the Church which will be shared in this online space and through this interaction may we increase in our understanding and love for you.

May my patron saint (say the name of your patron saint you received in your baptism or confirmation) be praying for me now. I thank God for giving me a Faith Friend who will accompany me in my journey of Faith online. I pray that (name of the Faith Friend) be rewarded by the Lord for her/his support and prayer for me. Amen

May the guardian angels God has entrusted us with always be on and by our side while we read, understand and discuss the knowledge of faith shared here

Write your prayer here

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Rom 12:15

Thank you for the wonderful prayer. So do we proceed by discussing the question of people that are not Christians and life after death for them? Is this the question that we will focus on for this scroll?

Posted by CS Falcon



## Knowing about Your Faith - Part 3

General Introduction

Dear Falcon

Thank your prayers, sorry for the delay in assigning this scroll. The past week has been very tiring and rewarding at the same time. Last week GOD blessed us with a beautiful baby boy. Please pray for us as we try to be good christian parents.

Time for the next scroll! Your question about the fate of non christians and what happens to them after life is quite an interesting one. It has been very confusing for me when I was initially growing up.

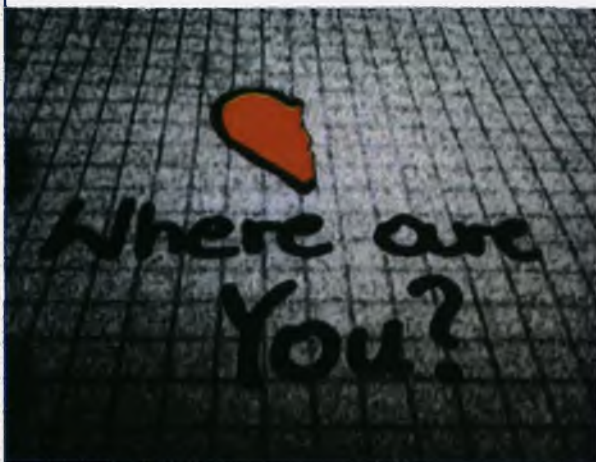
Rather than giving you an answer as to yes or no, I would like to invite you to ponder more as to why is this a question in your heart. Is it just to satisfy your gap of knowledge about this scenario of unbelievers or is it because you are worried and you really want them to get to heaven? The catholic church gives us many teaching about unbelievers, if they will go to heaven, will there be a judgement etc. But when you read the bible you will know that Jesus was not interested in the laws, but in the final vision of why the law was established. The laws were instantiated so that the people observing the laws may become worthy of heaven. So the importance is the people and not the law.

So this question is basically the call of the GOD in your life to understand where your faith is. The Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' (Gen 3:9)

This is one of the first questions asked by God in the Scripture.

Knowing about our faith will tell us where we are. Some questions like have I received baptism, how many times do I go for the sacraments, do I pray for the non believers, do I live an active christian life that proclaims my faith without much use of words; will help you realise where you are in this journey to GOD our father.

### ! Instructions to Faithfriend



But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, □Where are you? (Gen 3:9)

This is one of the first questions asked by God in the Scripture.

Knowing about our faith will tell us where we are. These questions may help us understand your faith:



## Case 3, Scroll 3 (cont'd)

Have you received baptism?

- Yes  
 No

Do you receive the sacraments regularly?

- Yes  
 No

How often do you receive the sacraments?

- Daily  
 Weekly  
 As often as I can  
 No, I do not receive the sacraments

Since there are several sacraments, I believe the two most people receive frequently are holy communion and reconciliation. I receive holy communion weekly but reconciliation I receive every few months. So that is why my answer to "How often do you receive the sacraments?" is "As often as I can." Congratulations on your new baby boy. I will pray that he stays healthy and happy as he grows. The question of what happens to non-Christians after they pass away is something that was brought up in a conversation between me and one of my closest friends. She believes in God and has many strong values but I know that she does not receive her sacraments regularly. I know that Christians themselves are split into several categories like Roman Catholic to Presbyterian. But anyways what we discussed was about non-Christians. Such as people who have worship different deities. (Different religions such as Hinduism and Judaism.) Most families who pass on their religion to their children and most of these children pick up the religion and practice it because they were taught it. They have no thoughts of Christianity or Jesus Christ. So we were saying that it is not their fault or anyone's because it is handing down traditions/family customs. I understand that true heaven is reached by the people's actions but with the ten commandments, one stating "Keep holy the Sabbath day," and another stating "You shall have no other God besides me," the result is confusing. Children are taught that the ten commandments must always be the basis—you have to follow these to be a good Christian but what about non-Christians who are truly wonderful people? This is a deep argument and I do not expect a straight answer but it is interesting learning what other people think.

Posted by CS Falcon

Hi Falcon <br><br> Thanks for your prayers and wishes. I will convey them to my wife. <br><br> Have a read of this article: [http://www.cephas-library.com/catholic/catholic\\_pope\\_says\\_nonbelievers\\_can\\_be\\_saved.html](http://www.cephas-library.com/catholic/catholic_pope_says_nonbelievers_can_be_saved.html). Let me know what you think.

Posted by FF Cedar

## Case 3, Scroll 3 (cont'd)

H Falcon May be you can ignore the previous article in the message. I should have read more before I asked you to read it. Basically I wanted to convey that any body from any cast or religion who really want to know GOD, he will reveal himself to them. I believe this from the numerous conversions that I have read and heard during preachings. But most of us are content with what we have. There is no thirst to really know him or there is no guidance. Often many people experience a kind of void or thirst in their life which is only fulfilled by GOD, but unfortunately not many from other religions know about it. And they find other means to try and satisfy that. St Augustine has rightfully said that man can only find his completeness in GOD. According to the catholic faith we believe that any one from another religion, although he does not know Christ, but because he was righteous in his deeds, such as keeping the society laws and there was absolutely no opportunity to know about the Gospel, such a person will enter heaven. But who are we to judge. For example I do not know if a person is obedient to the laws of the society or not. GOD alone knows that. So in the end we cannot really say if a person will enter heaven or not, weather believer or non-believer. The only person who will be able to proclaim that will be himself, because of his communion with GOD. This is why Christ was able to say that those who have seen him has seen the father. He and father are one. Christ extends this invitation to us in asking us to be perfect like his heavenly father. This is why it is very important that we live a transparent lives so that people who interact with us can see our faith in action. St Francis famous words - "preach gospel at all times, use words if necessary". Another clarity that I would like to bring to you is that we are not justified by our actions, but only by GOD's grace. If that were the case, then Christ did not have to come and die for us. This grace we receive through sacraments. Let me know your thoughts. It is getting very exciting.

Posted by FF Cedar

Hell Cedar I'm sorry on taking a whole week to respond to your message. I have been in the middle of doing a lot of things and becoming overwhelmed. I am praying that these coming few months will be productive and fruitful for me. I am starting to understand what you mean by being righteous in his/her deeds and that being the "gateway" to heaven. And I use the term "gateway" very loosely because as you said who are we to judge. That point reminds me of the conversation I had with my friend because that is exactly what she brought up. She thinks it does not matter what we think because ultimately it is not up to us and it does not concern us. It is between that man/woman and God. I do not want to stray away from this subject but I'm hoping that we are winding up to a conclusion. My next train of thought enters into something that you wrote--St. Francis' words "preach gospel at all times, use words if necessary." That is a very meaningful quotation. It brings me to the idea that we Christians should always preach the word of God. As much as I agree with this and wish all my loved ones to join me in following God's teachings, how deep does this saying go? Does it mean everyday, every moment spread the word of the Lord? I was just wondering when it comes to circles of friends, how are we to spread our faith without seeming overbearing or unwelcome? Please feel free to respond to this train of thought or expand on the earlier one.

Posted by CS Falcon

## Case3, Scroll 3 (cont'd)

Thanks for your prayers. To elaborate on preaching gospel at all times: If you agree with me, preaching is also in other words of conveying the message of Jesus. Whatever we use, words, actions or thoughts are basically a vehicle to take what is in me to some one else. So if I have the message of the gospel in me, then I can use words to take it out of me and give it to others. I can act and do things in a way for example showing the other cheek when other beat me on the one cheek, is a way of telling others that I am living the message that Jesus gave me to others. When I think with the message of the gospel in me, then all my future plannings automatically get the message of the gospel and others who are part of it also gets the message.


Posted by: FF Cedar

Okay I understand. We can preach through actions and words which do not bluntly say religious things. After all, God's teachings are universal not only in religion. I think when people see you as a healthy, wholesome person who has good family communication and nice friends, they see someone they admire. And through that, they can learn about God as well. Here's another song that's playing on the Christian radio station near us. I really like it. It's about family problems and hurt. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAKBxBXz1fo&ob=av2e>

Posted by: CS Falcon

hi <sup>Falcon</sup> you are very much correct. When you have an excellent relationship with everyone around, a healthy life style etc you will become the admiration of eveyone. But when you try and be a good christian, it is something more and may be somethig different. Simply put being a chrisrian is taking up your cross and following jesus whereverhe leads you. This may not ger you the admiration of all, but will certainly get you thw admiration of the most high GOD. It is from this conviction the holy spilt helps us to produce the fruits of love, peace and joy. When people see our lives very adament at following the will of GOD, eagerness to spread the gospel's message of love, then they will notice or admire us in another way, which has the potential to lead them to eternal life. So it is up to us, how i choose to be an admiration?


Posted by: FF Cedar



## Please tell me more - Part 4

General Introduction

Dear  how have you been? How is everyone at home? Hope you are ok with the above question. Please do let me know if my responses are ok for you or if there something that you would like me to change. Do let me know if I am too fast or too slow. Prayers,



Our journey has just begun  
**Miles to go before I sleep ...**

We are still in the beginning stage of this journey. Hope it is ok to ask some more questions to know each other.

Please do not hesitate to ask any question about myself also at any time.

---

Are you part of any faith related movements?

Yes  
 No

---

If yes, please indicate the movement or your own Parish Choir or Youth Mass etc. In the space below. e.g.

- Jesus Youth,
- Youth 2000,
- Legion of Mary,
- Catholic Youth Care,
- Pure In Heart,
- Parish Choir,
- Youth Mass,
- Ministry of the Word,
- Eucharistic Ministers etc.

Other, please specify below.

---

Please indicate if you are part of any of the above? (...tell me more)

## Case 3, Scroll 4 (Cont'd)

I was previously part of Jesus Youth of America, the Parish Choir, and Youth Masses at my Church. Since I am at college now, it is harder to go to my regular Church so I am not as active in that community. I also used to be an altar server for three to four years when I was younger. I try to go to mass at my college Chapel or Church when I have the time. As of now, I do not consider myself part of any of the above. What about you?

Posted by CS Falcon

I was a little confused on where to post so I answered your question as a start to this conversation.

Posted by CS Falcon

hi, thanks for sharing that. Myself, I am part of the jy movement. I try to attend the prayer meetings every week. Its a great source of love of god. How is everything else with you? Do you miss everyone at home, since you are away from them? How is your personal prayers going?

Posted by FF Cedar

I am doing well. I am pretty close to home and I try to go home every weekend. But this semester at school has been more strenuous than last year since I am working as well as taking classes. I am busy all the time and exams are starting. I have one at least every week. I pray every night and I try to remember to pray in the morning as well. I also pray before taking my exams. How is your family?

Posted by CS Falcon

hi, sorry to have taken so long to come back to you. Happy to know that you are progressing well. Everyone at home are fine. Baby ryan is growing very fast. Can I suggest that you say this prayer when you wake up dally along with your other prayers. Holy spirit fill me with your love and wisdom.

Posted by FF Cedar

Thank you for the prayer suggestion. I'll try to keep that in my mind as I go through my days.

Posted by CS Falcon

So what more do we need to discuss in this scroll? Getting to know each other in what aspect? Sorry if I'm a little confused, I am just much better with directions.)


Posted by CS Falcon

F Falcon we will get to know as we go along exploring the scrolls, but more importantly get to know our savior better. I will assign the new scroll soon.

Posted by FF Cedar

Okay

## Case 3, Scroll 5 (cont'd)




## The Problem of Suffering - Part 1

Suffering in the World

---

Dear Falcon There are some very interesting thoughts described above. Since this topic is about suffering which is one of the core aspects of christianity, I think it will be good to take some time to go through and thoroughly understand this topic well. Please answer the above questions and shoot some questions if you have any. Also when you get time, read some text on the origin of suffering. eg <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suffering>



**! Instructions to Faithful**

Why are there so many people suffering in the world while others are enjoying a great life?

**The Problem of Suffering**  
Human beings have been puzzled by the enigma of suffering from ancient times. Before the time of Christ, in the life of Buddha there were many instances of understanding suffering around him:

One afternoon his father took young Buddha to the annual Ploughing Festival. The king began the ceremony by driving a fine pair of beautifully decorated bullocks. Buddha sat down under a rose-apple tree and watched everyone. He noticed that while people were happily enjoying themselves, the bullocks had to work terribly hard and plough the field. They did not look happy at all. Then he noticed various other creatures around him. He saw a lizard eating ants. But soon a snake came, caught the lizard, and ate it. Then, suddenly a bird came down from the sky, picked up the snake and so it was eaten also.

- ✚ Buddha thought that all these creatures might think that they were happy for a while, but that they ended up suffering.
- ✚ Jesus, the Son of God, suffered on the cross and died for us.
- ✚ In 13th Century, Saint Francis of Assisi was so moved by the suffering of people around him that he used to live like them.
- ✚ In recent times, Mother Teresa was inspired to alleviate the suffering of people considering them each individually as another Jesus Christ himself who suffered for human kind.

So, suffering is a puzzle that baffled us for centuries which continues to pose various questions in our mind. This question was asked by a young person from Ireland: Why some people are suffering while others are having a good time?

What do you think of the story above and the enigma of suffering?

Thank you for sharing the story about the young Buddha. I've never heard it before and it was interesting. And about the enigma of suffering, I think that is a question that almost everyone in this universe has thought of at one point or another. Either when seeing others who suffer so much or when something unfortunate happens to you, saying "Why me?" I think it's a complex, abstract concept. Of course, by

## Case 3, Scroll 5 (cont'd)

Falcon how are you? First of all thank you for being patient with me for taking a long time to reply to discussions. Now along with the story of budha, let me share a scenario that a priest friend once told me. One day for dinner, mom told her two boys, 'I have prepared your favourite dessert today. So quickly finish your vegetables and rice.' But the boys did not like the vegetables. But the elderly boy patiently sat and completed his food. The younger one kept on crying and refused to eat his dinner and wanted to eat his dessert first. So the good mom had to use the rod on him occasionally to make him finish the dinner. At the end of the dinner both the boys got the dinner they have been eagerly waiting for. Now tell me what do you think of the sufferings of these boys or boy?

Posted by FF Cedar

I think another option may have been to let the younger one be and not use the rod on him. This way he wouldn't finish his dinner and thus, would not get dessert. And see his older brother get it because he was a good boy and ate all his dinner without fuss. Hitting the younger one to forcefully make him finish dinner is one way to do it but it seemed that the fairest thing to do was let the older boy receive dessert and the younger boy not because he didn't finish his dinner. Hopefully, he learns from his mistakes (or his sufferings).

Posted by CS Falcon

hi, that's really interesting to see how you are thinking of a different end to the story. Can I ask you, why you think this sort of end is preferable? In the above story both the boys received the dinner and dessert. Sometimes GOD the father is the mom in the story. The good mom does not like the children to go hungry and not have the nutrients that are required for their growing years. Coming back to the topic of suffering the point I wanted to make here was that the elder boy did not have any suffering but the younger one did. The elder boy already had the discipline in him to wait for the dinner to be completed before having the dessert. The dinner or the vegetables in the story is GOD's will for our lives. The dessert is the reward which is heaven itself. Most of the sufferings in this world is because we are in search of shortcuts like the younger boy, who was impatient to get to the dessert without finishing the dinner. When you look at the elder boy, there is peace around him, he is the joy of his mother and he is confident of his dessert. This doesn't necessarily mean that the elder boy thoroughly enjoyed his dinner. There may be times when he found it dry and pale. But he was determined to go through it, because he wanted the dessert. It is the same with all of us who try to follow GOD's will. At times the roads will get bumpy. At times we are not sure if there is any point of doing all that. In the story above the elder son completely trusted his mother. However dry or tasteless his dinner was, he was ready to go through it because he was sure of his reward. Let me know what your thoughts are on this? Also think about the younger boy. Why do you think he did not like to go through the dinner?

Posted by FF Cedar

## Case 3, Scroll 5 (cont'd)

I think I interpreted your story in a different, more literal way. I saw the older brother as more mature and experienced than the younger one. I feel that he ate his dinner and waited for dinner patiently because he knows that his mother will not let him eat dessert without finishing his vegetables. Since he is older, he knows more. He understands that no matter what, dinner comes before dessert. The younger boy is more immature and still growing and understanding. My thought of letting the younger boy skip dessert was so that he could learn what his mother wants. He makes mistakes and sometimes disappoints his parents (or God) because he is still learning what is right and wrong. This is why I thought that it would be preferable for the younger boy to skip dessert. I understand now you meant the dessert to be a metaphor for the rewards in heaven. This way, it is different. It would be best for the younger brother to understand what is right and finish his vegetables. But this story can be interpreted in a different way. We are the younger boy—we always make mistakes and disappoint the Lord but he looks to us to correct our mistakes and not to sin again. This way people can learn from us (as the younger brother can see his older brother receive dessert). And I guess having grown up in such a different society in America, I do not think hitting a child is ever a good idea. There are other ways to show what the child did wrong without inflicting pain. I hope now that you understand what I mean.

Posted by CS Falcon

that's good thinking. It is true that the ways we are brought up is different, but hey the gospel did survive for more than 2000 years communicating the same message and still challenging and transforming lives. So I think you and I can draw a little bit of hope from that. What I wanted convey is that they pain or suffering in the form of a rod which gives physical pain or pain due to the lack of not being able to have something leads to a form of suffering. And the primary cause of this is lack of obedience. Is that an acceptable conclusion?

Posted by FF Cedar

That suffering comes from a lack of obedience to God. Yes, I think that's an acceptable conclusion. Is that what you were thinking?

Posted by CS Falcon



Case 3, Scroll 5 (cont'd)

Do you want to share any personal experience of suffering?

I can't say that I have gone through anything as extreme as suffering. It's been a blessing.



This is a question which has few overtones. We believe that God is omnipotent (all-powerful). How can an omnipotent God allow suffering? Uneven distribution of wealth, health, and happiness may also be attributed to the work of God. How can this be if God is love and the source of justice? Simply, how can God allow some people suffer because of no fault of their own? The discussion on suffering will be continued in the next scroll as well.

Is the question of suffering clear to you? Do you want to add anything more to this?

I don't think the questions of suffering will ever be crystal clear to me. It's true, why are people suffering—good people? When others who might not be following the true path to God are millionaires? It's the belief that material things can't measure up to what it really means to be with God. Seeing what you have isn't believing...you have to believe without the evidence.

## Bibliography

- Adams, A , Lunt, P , & Cairns, P (2008) A qualitative approach to HCI research In Cairns, P , & Cox, A L (Eds ), *Research methods for human computer interaction* (pp 138-157) Cambridge Cambridge University Press
- Amos, W E , & Wellford, C F (Eds ) (1967) *Delinquency prevention, theory and practice* New Jersey Prentice-Hall
- Anderson, K R , & Reese, R D (2000) *Spiritual mentoring A guide for seeking and giving direction* Surrey Eagle
- Aykara, T (1997) *Cosmic consciousness A comparative study on Teilhard de Chardin and Sri Aurobindo* Bangalore Dharmaram Publications
- Babin, P (1991) *The new era in religious communication* Minneapolis Fortress Press
- Bannon, B (2007) *The quest for postmodern ethics* Bangalore Dharmaram Publications
- Bartle, R (2003, August 1) *What are virtual worlds?* Retrieved Jan 16, 2008, from [http //www peachpit com/articles/article.aspx?p=99703&rl=1](http://www.peachpit.com/articles/article.aspx?p=99703&rl=1)
- Bazeley, P (2007) *Qualitative data analysis with Nvivo* London Sage Publications
- Beaudoin, T (1998) *Virtual faith* San Francisco Jossey Bass Publishers
- Benedict XVI (2009, January 23) *Pope gives task to youth Evangelize the Net* Retrieved June 10, 2010, from [http //www zenit org/article-24880?l=english](http://www.zenit.org/article-24880?l=english)
- Berg, B L (2009) *Qualitative research methods* Longbeach California State University
- Boran, G (1999) *The pastoral challenges of a new age* Dublin Veritas
- Bosch, D J (1991) *Transforming mission Paradigm shifts in theology of mission* New York Orbis Books
- Brasher, B E (2001) *Give me that online religion* New Jersey Rutgers University Press
- Briggs, A , & Burke, P (2005) *A social history of the media From Gutenberg to the Internet* Cambridge Polity Press
- Briggs, D (2008, March 7) Young Catholics respond to a chance to shine *National Catholic Reporter* (p 19) Kansas City The National Catholic Reporter Publishing Company
- Burke-Sullivan, E (2008, February) Is Generation Y still Catholic? *Today's parish minister*, 12-13
- Campbell, H (2005) *Exploring religious community online We are One in the Network* New York Peter Lang

- Careaga, A (2002) *Hooked on the net How to say goodnight when the party never ends* Grand Rapids Kregal Publications
- Careaga, A (2001) *e-Ministry Connecting with the net generation* Grand Rapids Kregal Publications
- Carnegie Mellon University (2010) *Captcha Telling humans and computers apart automatically* Retrieved May 4, 2011, from [http //www captcha net](http://www.captcha.net)
- Castells, Manuel (2000) *The rise of the network society* Oxford Blackwell
- CCC (1994) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* Dublin Veritas
- Chao, G T (1997) Mentoring phases and outcomes *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 51, 15–28 Retrieved August 18, 2011, from [http //www sciencedirect com/science/article/pii/S0001879197915918](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0001879197915918)
- Charmaz, K (2006) *Constructing grounded theory A practical guide through qualitative analysis* London Sage Publications
- Clancy, J G (1963) *Apostle of our time* New York P J Kennedy & Sons
- Clift, W B (1987) Rejuvenation In Eliade, Mircea (Ed ), *The Encyclopaedia of religion* (Vol 12) (pp 271-274) New York MacMillan Publishing Company
- Communio et Progressio (1971) In Flannery, A (Ed ), *Vatican council II The conciliar and post conciliar documents* (pp 293-349) Dublin Dominican Publications
- Cowpewart, J , & Flynn, S (2002) *The Internet from A to Z* Cambridge Icon Books
- Crawford, M , & Rossiter, G (2006) *Reasons for living Education and young people's search for meaning, identity and spirituality* Victoria Acer Press
- Danesi, M (Ed ) (2000) *Encyclopedic dictionary of semiotics, media and communications* Toronto University of Toronto Press
- De Chardin, P T (1960) *The divine milieu* New York Harper and Brothers
- De Chardin, P T (1978) *The heart of matter* London Collins
- Deikman, A J (1968) Deautomatization and the Mystic Experience In Robert E Ornstein (Ed ), *The nature of human consciousness* (pp 216-233) San Francisco W H Freeman and Company
- Demers, D (2005) *Dictionary of mass communication and media research* Washington Marquette Books
- Detweiler, C , & Taylor, B (2005) *A matrix of meanings Finding God in pop culture* Michigan Grand Rapids
- Dewart, L (1989) *Evolution and Consciousness The role of speech in the origin and development of human nature* Toronto University of Toronto Press

- Donaldson, G (2008) *Initial Teacher Education* Retrieved August 18, 2011, from <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/mite.html>
- Dorr, D (2000) *Mission in Today's World* Columba Press Dublin
- Drumm, B (Ed) (2006) *Communicating the Gospel Celebrating 40 years of World Communications Day* Dublin Veritas
- Dulles, A (1995) John Paul II and the New Evangelisation What does it mean? In Ralph Martin and Peter Williamson (Eds), *John Paul II and the new evangelisation* (pp 25-39) San Francisco Ignatius Press
- Eisenstadt, S N, & Erikson, E (Eds) (1963) *The challenge of youth* New York Anchor Books
- Elliot, Michael (2010, December 6) Was it really so bad? *Time*, Vol 176, No 23, 70 – 72
- English, L M (1998) *Mentoring in religious education* Birmingham Religious Education Press
- The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1977) Youth In *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (pp 1090-1091) Chicago Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc
- European Union (2008, June 20) *Youth policies* Retrieved September 2, 2008, from [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/doc23\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/doc23_en.htm)
- Extraordinary Synod of Bishops (1985) Retrieved February 25, 2008, from [http://www.saint-mike.org/Library/Synod\\_Bishops/Final\\_Report1985.html](http://www.saint-mike.org/Library/Synod_Bishops/Final_Report1985.html)
- Federal Networking Council (1995, October 24) *FNC Resolution Definition of 'Internet'* Retrieved on 14 December 14, 2010, from [http://www.nitrd.gov/fnc/Internet\\_res.html](http://www.nitrd.gov/fnc/Internet_res.html)
- Fernback, J (1997) The individual within the collective Virtual ideology and the realization of collective principles In Jones, S G (Ed), *Virtual culture Identity and communication in cybersociety* (pp 102-133) London Sage
- Foley, J P (1989, October 4) *Criteria for ecumenical and inter-religious cooperation in communications* Retrieved January 2, 2007, from [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/pccs/documents/rc\\_pc\\_pccs\\_doc\\_04101989\\_criteria\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_04101989_criteria_en.html)
- Foley, J P (2002a, February 22) *the Church and Internet* Retrieved January 3, 2008, from [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/pccs/documents/rc\\_pc\\_pccs\\_doc\\_20020228\\_church-internet\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_church-internet_en.html)
- Foley, J P (2002b, February 22) *Ethics in Internet* Retrieved August 15, 2008, from [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/pccs/documents/rc\\_pc\\_pccs\\_doc\\_20020228\\_ethics-internet\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_ethics-internet_en.html)

- Free Software Foundation (2007, June 29) *GNU General public license* Retrieved May 4, 2011, from [http //www gnu org/licenses/gpl.html](http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html)
- Fuellenbach, J (2002) *Church Community for the Kingdom* New York Orbis Books
- Fulton J , Abela, A M , Borowik, I , Dowling, T , Marler, P L , & Tomasi, L (2000) *Young Catholics at the New Millennium Religion and morality of young adults in western countries* Dublin University College Dublin Press
- Gallagher, M P (2003) *Clashing symbols An introduction to faith and culture*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed ) London Darton, Longman and Todd
- GDC (1998) *The general directory for catechesis* Dublin Veritas
- Gergen, M M , & Gergen, K J (2003) Qualitative inquiry Tensions and transformations In Denzin, N K , & Lincoln Y S (Eds ), *The landscapes of qualitative research*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed ) (pp 580-605) California Sage Publications
- Gibson, W (1984) *Neuromancer* In Neil Spiller (Ed ), *Cyber\_Reader Critical writing for the digital era* (pp 102-107) London Phaidon Press
- Giles, D (2003) *Media psychology* New Jersey Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Glaser, B G , & Strauss, A L (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory Strategies for qualitative research* Chicago Aldine Publishing Company
- Graham, D W (2002, February 10) *Heraclitus* Retrieved November, 8, 2008, from [http //www iep utm edu/h/heraclit.htm](http://www.iep.utm.edu/h/heraclit.htm)
- Granfield, D (1991) *Heightened consciousness The mystical difference* New York Paulist Press
- Granfield, P (1994) The theology of the Church and communication In Patrick Granfield (Ed ), *The Church and communication* (pp 1-18) Kansas City Sheed & Ward
- Gray, D (1969) *The one and the many Teilhard de Chardin's vision of unity* London Burns and Oates
- Gray, J L , & Starke, F A (1988) *Organizational behaviour Concepts and applications* (4<sup>th</sup> ed ) London Merril Publishing Company
- Guizzo, E M (2003, September) The essential message Calude E Shannon and the making of communication theory Retrieved on January 4, 2007, from [http //dspace mit edu/bitstream/handle/1721 1/39429/54526133.pdf](http://dspace.mit.edu/bitstream/handle/1721.1/39429/54526133.pdf)
- Healy, W , & Alper, B S (1941) *Criminal youth and the Borstal system* New York The Commonwealth Fund

- Heathfield, S M (2010) A mentor is key in employee development Retrieved August 8, 2011, from [http //humanresources about com/b/2010/09/05/mentoring-develops-employees htm](http://humanresources.about.com/b/2010/09/05/mentoring-develops-employees.htm)
- Heaven, W (2008, April 18) Our Bishops should be just a click away *The catholic herald* - 10 London
- Hebblethwaite, P (1993) *Paul VI The first modern Pope* London Harper Collins Religious
- Heim, M (1993) *The metaphysics of virtual reality* New York Oxford University Press
- Henrici, P (1994) Truth and power in ecclesial communication In Patrick Granfield (Ed ), *The Church and communication* (pp 40-60) Kansas City Sheed & Ward
- Hill, B V (2001) God and youth in the global village An update In Francis, L J (Ed ), *The fourth R for the Third Millennium* (pp 97-114) Dublin Lindsifarne
- Horsfield, P , & Teusner, P (2007) A mediated religion Historical perspectives on Christianity and the Internet *Studies in world Christianity* Vol 13, Number 3, 278-295 Retrieved December 17, 2007, from [http //muse jhu edu remote library dcu ie/journals/studies\\_in\\_world\\_christianity/toc/swc13 3 html](http://muse.jhu.edu/remote_library_dcu_ie/journals/studies_in_world_christianity/toc/swc13_3.html)
- Hutchins, T (2007) Creating Church online A case-study approach to religious experience *Studies in world Christianity* Vol 13, Number 3, 243-260 Retrieved May 16, 2009, from [http //muse jhu edu/login?uri=/journals/studies\\_in\\_world\\_christianity/v013/13\\_3hutchings.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/studies_in_world_christianity/v013/13_3hutchings.html)
- Indich, W M (1980) *Consciousness in Advaita Vedanta* Delhi Motilal Banarsidass
- Irish Episcopal Conference (2010) *Share the Good News National Directory for Catechesis* Dublin Veritas
- Jagodzinski, J (2004) *Youth fantasies* New York Palgrave MacMillan
- James, W (1892) *The stream of consciousness* [Electronic] Retrieved January 1, 2011, from [http //webpace ship edu/cgboer/jamesselection.html](http://webpace.ship.edu/cgboer/jamesselection.html)
- John Paul II (1979) Catechesi tradendae In *Apostolic Exhortations*, (pp 1179-1238) Trivandrum Carmel International Publishing House
- John Paul II (1983a, January 18) *Discourse to the plenary assembly of the pontifical council for culture* Retrieved February 3, 2007, from [http //www vatican va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/1996/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_18011983\\_address-to-pc-culture\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1996/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_18011983_address-to-pc-culture_en.html)

- John Paul II (1983b, March 9) *Discourse of John Paul II to the assembly of the CELAM*  
Retrieved November 1, 2007, from  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/1983/march/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19830309\\_assemblea-celam\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1983/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19830309_assemblea-celam_it.html)
- John Paul II (1985a) *To the youth of the world* London: Catholic Media Office
- John Paul II (1985b, March 31) *Dilecti amici World Youth Days* Retrieved November 2, 2007, from  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_31031985\\_dilecti-amici\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_31031985_dilecti-amici_en.html)
- John Paul II (1987, December 30) *Sollicitudo rei socialis* Retrieved November 3, 2007, from  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html)
- John Paul II (1988) *Christifideles laici* In *Apostolic exhortations* (pp 843-962)  
Trivandrum: Carmel International Publishing House
- John Paul II (1989, May 7) *Pornography and violence in the communications media: A pastoral response* Retrieved November 3, 2007, from  
[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/pccs/documents/rc\\_pc\\_pccs\\_doc\\_07051989\\_pornography\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_07051989_pornography_en.html)
- John Paul II (1990a) *On Catholic universities* In *Apostolic constitutions* (pp 55-88)  
Trivandrum: Carmel International Publishing House
- John Paul II (1990b) *Redemptoris missio* In *Encyclical letters* Trivandrum: Carmel International Publishing House
- John Paul II (1992, February 22) *Aetatis novae* Retrieved December 8, 2009, from  
[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/pccs/documents/rc\\_pc\\_pccs\\_doc\\_22021992\\_aetatis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_22021992_aetatis_en.html)
- John Paul II (1993, August 6) *Veritatis splendor* Retrieved November 4, 2007, from  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_06081993\\_veritatis-splendor\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor_en.html)
- John Paul II (1994a) *Crossing the threshold of hope* New York: Alfred A. Knopf
- John Paul II (1994b) *Tertio millennio adveniente* In *Apostolic letters* (pp 335-380)  
Trivandrum: Carmel International Publishing House
- John Paul II (1995) *Ecclesia in Africa* In *Apostolic exhortations* (pp 579-670) Trivandrum: Carmel International Publishing House

- John Paul II (1998a, September 14) *Fides et ratio* Retrieved November 4, 2007, from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_15101998\\_fides-et-ratio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_15101998_fides-et-ratio_en.html)
- John Paul II (1998b) *Speech of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II, meeting with ecclesial movements and new communities* Retrieved December 10, 2010, from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19980530\\_rflessioni\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19980530_rflessioni_en.html)
- John Paul II (1999a, May 30) *Message of John Paul II to the participants in the seminar on ecclesial movements and new communities* Retrieved December 10, 2010, from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/1999/june/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_18061999\\_laity\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1999/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_18061999_laity_en.html)
- John Paul II (1999b, June 29) *To the youth of the world Occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> World Youth Day* Retrieved September 16, 2007, from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/messages/youth/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_29061999\\_xv-world-youth-day\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/youth/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_29061999_xv-world-youth-day_en.html)
- John Paul II (1999c) *Ecclesia in Asia In Apostolic exhortations (pp 277-366)* Trivandrum Carmel International Publishing House
- John Paul II (2000a, June 4) *Proclaiming Christ in the media at the dawn of the new millennium* Retrieved September 16, 2007, from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/messages/communications/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_20000124\\_world-communications-day\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20000124_world-communications-day_en.html)
- John Paul II (2000b, June 4) *Ethics in communications* Retrieved September 16, 2007, from [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/pccs/documents/rc\\_pc\\_pccs\\_doc\\_20000530\\_ethics-communications\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20000530_ethics-communications_en.html)
- John Paul II (2001a) *Novo Millennio Ineunte In Apostolic letters (pp 117-166)* Trivandrum Carmel International Publishing House
- John Paul II (2001b, March 16) *The Church Cannot Be a Mere Spectator, Pope's Address to Social Communications Conferees* Retrieved October 1, 2007, from <http://www.zenit.org/article-902?l=english>
- John Paul II (2001c, May 27) *Preach from the housetops The Gospel in the age of global communication* Retrieved June 2, 2009, from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/messages/communications/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_20010124\\_world-communications-day\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20010124_world-communications-day_en.html)



- John Paul II (2001d) *Ecclesia in Oceania* In *Apostolic exhortations*, (pp 201-276)  
 Trivandrum Carmel International Publishing House
- John Paul II (2002, May 12) *Internet A new forum for proclaiming the Gospel* Retrieved  
 October 1, 2007, from  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/messages/communications/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_20020122\\_world-communications-day\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20020122_world-communications-day_en.html)
- John Paul II (2003) *Ecclesia in Europa* In *Apostolic exhortations*, (pp 121-200)  
 Trivandrum Carmel International Publishing House
- John Paul II (2004) *Mane nobiscum Domine* In *Apostolic letters*, (pp 15-34) Trivandrum  
 Carmel International Publishing House
- John Paul II (2005, January 24) *The rapid development* Retrieved October 1, 2007, from  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_20050124\\_il-rapido-sviluppo\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20050124_il-rapido-sviluppo_en.html)
- Johnston, F W (1975) *Heart of the saints* London T Shand Publications
- Jones, S G (1997) The Internet and its social landscape In Jones, S G (Ed ), *Virtual culture Identity and communication in cybersociety* (p 20-32) London Sage
- Kay, W K , & Francis, L J (1996) *Drift from the churches* Cardiff University of Wales  
 Press
- Kelly, K (1994) *Out of Control The New Biology of Machines* London Fourth Estate
- Kennedy, M , & Doyle, B (Eds) (1998) *Best practice in youth ministry* Dublin The  
 Columba Press
- Kienzler, K (1994) The Church as a communion and communication In Granfield, P (Ed ),  
*The Church and communication* (pp 80-96) Kansas City Sheed & Ward
- Kieran, P , & Hession, A (2003) *Children Catholicism and religious education* Dublin  
 Veritas
- Kress R & Malanowski, G (2003) In Thomas Carson & Joann Cerrito (Eds ), *The new  
 Catholic Encyclopaedia, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed* (p 27-31) New York Thomson & Gale
- Lajoie, M (1996) *Cultures of the Internet* London Sage Publications
- Langan, T (2000) *Surviving the age of virtual reality* Columbia University of Missouri  
 Press
- Lazar, J , Feng, J H , & Hochheiser, H (2010) *Research methods in human computer  
 interaction* Chichester John Wiley and Sons Ltd
- Leech, N L , & Onwuegbuzie, A J (2007) An array of qualitative data analysis tools A call  
 for data analysis triangulation *School psychology quarterly*, Vol 22, No 4, 557-584

Retrieved April 30, 2011, from <http://class.classmatandread.net/qual/-qualanalysis%282%29.pdf>

- Lenhart, A , Purcell, K , Smith, A & Zickuhr, K (2010, February 3) *Social media & mobile Internet use among teens and young adults* Retrieved on December 6, 2010, from <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1484/social-media-mobile-internet-use-teens-millennials-fewer-blog>
- Lewins, A , & Silver, C (2007) *Using software in qualitative research A step-by-step guide* London Sage Publications
- Lindenberger, J (2005) *Build a Mentoring Culture* Retrieved August 18, 2011, from [http://humanresources.about.com/od/coachingmentoring/a/mentoring\\_boom\\_3.htm](http://humanresources.about.com/od/coachingmentoring/a/mentoring_boom_3.htm)
- Lindlof, T R , & Taylor, B C (2002) *Qualitative Communication* In *Research methods*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed ) Thousand Oaks, CA Sage
- Luzbetak, L J (1988) *The Church and cultures New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, New York Orbis Books
- Mabry, L (2008) *Case Study in Social Research* In Alasuutari, Pertti, Bickman, Leonard and Brannen, Julia (Eds ), *The Sage handbook of social research methods* (pp 214-225) London Sage Publications
- Mahfood, S (2008, Winter) *Love and Responsibility The Personalization Principle in Cyberspace* *Seminary Journal* Vol 14, No 3, 72-76 Dayton United Theological Seminary
- Malphurs, A , & Malphurs, M (2003) *Church next Using the Internet to maximise your ministry* Grand Rapids Kregel Publications
- Martin, C A (Ed ) (1997) *Peter Norton's introduction to computers*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed ) Westerville Glencoe/McGraw-Hill
- Matthaei, S H (1996) *Faith matters Faith-mentoring in the faith community* Pennsylvania Trinity Press
- McClave, H (1997) *Communication for business* Dublin Gill and Macmillan
- McLuhan, M , & Fiore, Q (1967) *The medium is the message* Middlesex Penguin Books
- McQuail, D (2000) *McQuail's mass communication theory* (4<sup>th</sup> ed ) London Sage Publications
- Mirzoeff, N (2006) *An introduction to visual culture* London Routledge
- Mooney, C F (1964) *Teilhard de Chardin and the mystery of Christ* London Collins
- Moran, G (1983) *Religious education development* Minnesota Winston Press

- Muldoon, T (2005, January) Postmodern spirituality and the ignatian fundamentum *The Way*, 44/1, 88-100
- Naughton, J (1999) *A brief history of the future The origins of the Internet* London Weidenfeld & Nicholson
- Nicholas-Hays , & Breaux, C (1998) *Journey into consciousness The chakras, tantra and Jungian psychology* Delhi Motilal Banarsidass
- Nvivo Training (2011) *Consultancy and support* Retrieved April 29, 2011, from [http //www Nvivotraining eu/clients](http://www.Nvivotraining.eu/clients)
- Osmer, R R , & Schweitzer, F (2003) *Religious education between modernization and globalisation* Grand Rapids William B Eerdmans Publishing Company
- Oxford Dictionary (1987) *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English* London Oxford University Press
- Pallant, J (2001) *SPSS Survival manual* Berkshire Open University Press
- Parks, S D (2000) *Big questions worthy dreams Mentoring young adults in their search for meaning purpose and faith* San Francisco Jossey-Bass
- Paul VI (1964, August 6) *Ecclesiam suam* Retrieved October 16, 2007, from [http //www vatican va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_06081964\\_ecclesiam\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam_en.html)
- Paul VI (1967, March 26) *Populorum progressio* Retrieved October 18, 2007, from [http //www vatican va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_26031967\\_populorum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum_en.html)
- Paul VI (1969, April 7) *Social communications and the family, 3rd World Communications Day* Retrieved October 19, 2007, from [http //www vatican va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/messages/communications/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_mes\\_19690407\\_iii-com-day\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/messages/communications/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19690407_iii-com-day_en.html)
- Paul VI (1970, April 6) *Social communications and youth - 4<sup>th</sup> World Communications Day* Retrieved October 19, 2007, from [http //www vatican va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/messages/communications/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_mes\\_19700406\\_iv-com-day\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/messages/communications/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19700406_iv-com-day_en.html)
- Paul VI (1971, May 14) *Octogesima adveniens, Apostolic Letter* Retrieved October 19, 2007, from [http //www vatican va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_apl\\_19710514\\_octogesima-adveniens\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-adveniens_en.html)
- Paul VI (1975a, May 9) *Gaudete in Domino, Apostolic Exhortation* Retrieved October 17, 2007, from

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19750509\\_gaudete-in-domino\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19750509_gaudete-in-domino_en.html)

Paul VI (1975b, December 8) *Evangelii nuntiandi, Apostolic Exhortation* Retrieved October 21, 2007,

from [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html)

Pearson, J. C., & Nelson, P. E. (Eds.) (2000) *An introduction to human communication: understanding and sharing*. London: McGraw-Hill Higher Education

Peter, I. (2004) The history of email. *The Internet History Project*. Retrieved November 22, 2010, from <http://www.nethistory.info/History%20of%20the%20Internet/email.html>

Plude, F. F. (1994) Interactive communications in the Church. In Patrick Granfield (Ed.), *The Church and communication* (pp. 179-195). Kansas City: Sheed & Ward

Powers, G. E. (1967) Prevention through religion. In William E. Amos and Charles F. Wellford (eds.), *Delinquency Prevention: Theory and Practice* (pp. 115-131). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall

Pye, R. (2005, April) Sacred space and online communities. *The Way*, 44/2, 83-92

QSR International (2008a) Nvivo 8. Retrieved April 29, 2011, from <http://www.qsrinternational.com/FileResourceHandler.ashx/RelatedDocuments/DocumentFile/454/Nvivo8-feature-list.pdf>

QSR International (2008b) Nvivo 8. Retrieved April 29, 2011, from [http://www.qsrinternational.com/FileResourceHandler.ashx/RelatedDocuments/DocumentFile/328/Ready\\_to\\_share\\_your\\_findings\\_in\\_Nvivo.pdf](http://www.qsrinternational.com/FileResourceHandler.ashx/RelatedDocuments/DocumentFile/328/Ready_to_share_your_findings_in_Nvivo.pdf)

Rabey, S. (2001) *In search of authentic faith*. Colorado: Waterbrook Press

*Renewing the Vision* (1997) *A framework for Catholic youth ministry*. Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference

Rheingold, H. (2000) *The virtual community: Homesteading on the electronic frontier*. Cambridge: The MIT Press

Rowley, J. B. (1999, May) The good mentor. In *Supporting new teachers* Vol. 56, Number 8, 20-22. Retrieved August 18, 2011, from

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may99/vol56/num08/The-Good-Mentor.aspx>

Rutter, M., & Giller, H. (1983) *Juvenile delinquency: Trends and perspectives*. Harmondsworth: Penguin

- Ryan, G W , & Bernard, H R (2003) *Data management and analysis methods* In Denzin, N K , & Lincoln, Y S (Eds ), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp 259-296) California Sage Publications
- Rylko, S (1998), *Young People and the Pope*, In *Together on the European roads* (pp 156-179) Vatican City Pontifical Council for the Laity
- Saldana, J (2009) *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* London Sage Publications
- Sanks, T H (2003, Fall) *Globalisation postmodernity and governance in the Church Louvain Studies*, 194-216
- Sarno, R A (1987) *Using media in religious education* Birmingham Religious Education Press
- Saunders W (2003) *The Role of Godparents* Retrieved August 18, 2011, from [http //www catholiceducation org/articles/religion/re0233 html](http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/religion/re0233.html)
- Schillebeeckx, E (1981) *Ministry A case for change* London SCM Press
- Schrag, C O (1997) *The self and postmodernity* New Haven Yale University Press
- Schultz, K A (2007) *Pope Paul VI Christian values and virtues* New York The Crossroad Publishing Company
- Searle, J R (1992) *The problem of consciousness* [Electronic] Retrieved February 2, 2011, from [http //users ecs soton ac uk/harnad/Papers/Py104/searle prob html](http://users.ecs.soton.ac.uk/harnad/Papers/Py104/searle_prob.html)
- Sellner, E C (2002) *Mentoring The ministry of spiritual kinship* Cambridge Cowley Publications
- Shah, I (1968) *The Legend of Nasrudin* In Ornstein, R E (Ed ), *The nature of human consciousness A book of readings* (pp 281-288) San Francisco W H Freeman and Company
- Siegle, D (2003) *Reliability* Retrieved May 04, 2011, from [http //www gifted uconn edu/siegle/research/Instrument%20Reliability%20and%20Validity/Reliability htm](http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/siegle/research/Instrument%20Reliability%20and%20Validity/Reliability.htm)
- Sierra-Gutiérrez, F (1993) *Communication Mutual Self-Mediation in Context* Farrell, T J , & Soukup P A (Eds ), *Communication and Lonergan Common ground for forging the New Age* (pp 269-293) Kansas City Sheed & Ward
- Silverman, D (2001) *Interpreting qualitative data Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed ) London Sage Publications
- Smith, M (2007) *Fundamentals of management* Maidenhead McGrawhill
- Soukup, P A (1996) *Media, culture and catholicism* Kansas City Sheed & Ward

- Spiller, N (Ed ) (2002) *Cyber\_Reader Critical writing for the digital era* London Phadon Press
- Starcevich, M M (2009) *Coach, mentor Is there a difference?* Retrieved August 18, 2011, from [http //www coachingandmentoring com/Articles/mentoring.html](http://www.coachingandmentoring.com/Articles/mentoring.html)
- Sweeny, B (2008) Vocabulary for mentoring and induction Retrieved August 18, 2011, from [http //teachermentors com/Mvocab.php](http://teachermentors.com/Mvocab.php)
- Sweetland, D (2004) Basic Communities In Michael Glazier & Monika K Hellwig (Eds ), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia* (P 68) Minesota Liturgical Press
- Talbot, S L (1995) *The future does not compute Transcending the machines in our midst* California O'Reilly Associates
- Taylor, M (2003) *Child pornography an Internet crime* East Sussex Brunner- Routledge
- Thurlow, C , Lengel, L , & Tomic, A (2004) *Computer mediated communication* London Sage Publications
- Thurmond, V A (2001, Third Quarter) The point of triangulation *Journal of nursing scholarship*, Third Quarter Retrieved February 1, 2011, from [http //www ruralhealth utas edu au/gr/resources/docs/the-point-of-triangulation.pdf](http://www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/gr/resources/docs/the-point-of-triangulation.pdf)
- Trauth, M P (1967) Young Christian workers In *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol XIV Tha to Zwi) (pp 1070-1071) San Francisco The Catholic University of America
- Triglio, J et al (2006) *John Paul II* Indianapolis Wiley Publishing International
- Tschabitscher, H (2007) Does the Pope Use Email? Retrieved Oct 1, 2007, from [http //email about com/cs/emailtrivia/a/pope\\_email.htm](http://email.about.com/cs/emailtrivia/a/pope_email.htm)
- Turbee, L (1997, March) Educational MOO *Text-Based virtual reality for learning in community* Retrieved Nov 10, 2008, from [http //www ericdigests org/1997-4/moo.htm](http://www.ericdigests.org/1997-4/moo.htm)
- Turkle, S (1996) *Life on the screen Identity in the age of the Internet* London Weidenfeld & Nicolson
- Vatican II (1963) Inter mirifica In Flannery, A (Ed ), *Vatican council II The conciliar and post conciliar documents* (pp 283-292) Dublin Dominican Publications
- Vatican II (1964a) Lumen gentium In Flannery, A (Ed ), *Vatican council II The conciliar and post conciliar documents* (pp 350-426) Dublin Dominican Publications
- Vatican II (1964b, November 21) *Unitatis redintegratio* Retrieved December 14, 2010, from [http //www vatican va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19641121\\_umtatis-redintegratio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_umtatis-redintegratio_en.html)

- Vatican II (1965a) *Ad Gentes divinitus* In Flannery, A (Ed ), *Vatican council II The conciliar and post conciliar documents* (pp 813-856) Dublin Dominican Publications
- Vatican II (1965b) *Gravissimum educationis* In Flannery A (Ed ), *Vatican council II The conciliar and post conciliar documents* (pp 725-737) Dublin Dominican Publications
- Vatican II (1965c) *Nostra aetate* In Flannery, A (Ed ), *Vatican council II The conciliar and post conciliar documents* (pp 738-742) Dublin Dominican Publications
- Vatican II (1965d) *Dei Verbum* In Flannery, A (Ed ), *Vatican council II The conciliar and post conciliar documents* (pp 750-765) Dublin Dominican Publications
- Vatican II (1965e) *Dignitatis humane* In Flannery, A (Ed ), *Vatican council II The conciliar and post conciliar documents* (pp 799-812) Dublin Dominican Publications
- Vatican II (1965f) *Gaudium et spes* In Flannery, A (Ed ), *Vatican council II The conciliar and post conciliar documents* (pp 903-1001) Dublin Dominican Publications
- Vatican II (1965g, December 7) *Message of the II Vatican council to youth* Retrieved October 10, 2007, from [http://www.vatican.va/gmg/documents/gmg-2002\\_11-vat-council\\_message-youth\\_19651207\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/gmg/documents/gmg-2002_11-vat-council_message-youth_19651207_en.html)
- Vogt B (2011) *The Church and new media* Indiana Our Sunday Visitor
- Vyas, R N (1984) *From consciousness to super consciousness Fundamentals of Indian philosophical psychology* New Delhi Cosmo Publications
- Walsh, J (Ed ) (1964) *The mind of Paul VI on the Church and the world* London Geoffrey Chapman
- Ward, G (Ed ) (1997) *The post modern God A theological reader* Massachusetts Blackwell Publishers
- Warren, M (1982) *Youth and the future of the church* Minneapolis The Seabury Press
- Warren, M (1989) *Faith, culture and the worshipping community* New York Paulist Press
- Watson, J , & Hill, A (Eds ) (2006) *Dictionary of media and communication studies* (7<sup>th</sup> ed ) London Hodder Arnold
- Weigel, G (2005) *Witness to hope The biography of John Paul II* New York Harper Collins
- Weitzman, E A (2003) *Software and Qualitative Research* In Denzin, N K , & Lincoln Y S (Eds ), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed ) (pp 310-385) California Sage Publications

- Wellman, B , & Gulia, M (1999) Virtual communities as communities In Smith, M A , & Kollock, P (Eds ), *Communities in cyberspace* (pp 167-299) New York Routledge
- Westerhoff, J H III , & Edwards, O C , (Eds ) (1981) *A faithful Church Issues in the history of catechesis* Connecticut Morehouse-Barlow Co , Inc
- Westerhoff, J H III , (1976) *Will our children have faith?* New York Seabury Press
- Whittaker, J (2002) *The Internet The basics* London Routledge
- Williams, P , & Nicholas, D (2001) *The Internet and the changing information environment* London Aslib-IMI
- Wordsworth, W (1904) Ode Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood In Selincourt, E D (Ed ), *Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* London Oxford University Press
- Wyckoff, D C , & Richter, Don (Eds ) (1982) *Religious education ministry with youth* Birmingham Religious Education Press
- Yin, R K (2003) *Case study research Design and methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed ) California Sage Publications
- Yin, R K (2009) *Case study research Design and methods*, (4<sup>th</sup> ed ) London Sage Publications
- Zachary, L J (2005) Creating a mentoring culture Retrieved August 18, 2011, from [http //humanresources about com/od/coachingmentoring/a/mentor\\_culture htm](http://humanresources.about.com/od/coachingmentoring/a/mentor_culture.htm)
- Zanzig, Tom (1987) *Understanding your faith* Winona Saint Mary's Press
- Zenit, (2006, May 1) New Vatican web site expected Retrieved December 18, 2007, from Permalink [http //zenit org/article-15898?l=english](http://zenit.org/article-15898?l=english)
- 365 Saints Your daily guide to the wisdom and wonder of their lives* (1995) New York Harper Collins Publishers