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“Cause a Commotion”: Using Social Media to Evangelize

The Pope's words — "hagan lio," "cause a commotion" — have inspired an online initiative making use of YouTube and Instagram to spread testimonies of faith by well-known speakers.

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Ramon and several friends of his began by interviewing Bishop Jose

Ignacio Munilla. From then on, for almost two years running, more than fifty influencers with upright values have put themselves in front of their cameras. And to think that all this came from an online day of recollection on this website!

A fruitful confinement

The story begins in March 2020, when the pandemic-caused isolation took people by surprise. A group of friends, after not seeing each other for some time, were looking forward to meeting during Holy Week.

The travel ban didn't discourage them: they found another way to see each other... from a distance. Like many others, they discovered Zoom and Google Meet, and other applications, and created something greater than a mere virtual connection.

Most of them were regularly attending means of Christian formation in centers of Opus Dei. Now, without the possibility of being present physically, they had to change their method. Ramon suggested to some friends that they meet on Zoom on Saturday afternoons for a time of prayer, taking advantage of the resources available on the Opus Dei website — specifically, the monthly recollection kits that were beginning to be offered at that time. Everyone thought it was a good idea, and each week they connected online to read the reflections found there, listen to a meditation, pray the Rosary, etc.

After several weeks, Jorge, ever inventive, asked: “Why don’t we invite an interesting guest to speak about hope in the present situation? Afterwards, we could put the video up on YouTube!” The first person invited was Bishop Jose Ignacio

Munilla, then bishop of San Sebastian, who spoke about evangelizing through social media. Afterwards Jose Maria Zavala, Pati Trigo and others were invited to speak: more than fifty influencers shared their own testimonies of faith and shed light during the dark period we were all going through.

Pope Francis, inspirer of the project

“When the proposal first took shape,” Ramon says, “we discussed the name we would use in the virtual world. During one of the Saturday meetings, we saw a video of Pope Francis speaking at World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, where he forcefully told the young people: I want you to cause a commotion, I want you to reach out. All of us sensed in those words an indication of where we had to go.”

So they didn't let the pandemic stop them from "reaching out" virtually, taking the Pope's words *hagan lio*, "cause a commotion," as their name on Instagram (@hagamoslio), since it expressed so clearly the goal of their efforts.

The Pope also helped them to choose the content and the way to communicate it. A number of people in the group had read the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*, from which they obtained their guiding ideas. Among them was the importance of personal testimony in present day society. As the Pope says there, making use of an idea of Saint Paul VI: "Contemporary man listens more easily to witnesses than to teachers." Moreover, he encourages Christian youth to create opportunities for dialogue with other young people, using social media. Otherwise the message of Christ would not reach the "virtual

peripheries,” and online relationships would become more and more inhuman.

Showing the Church’s charisms

In a natural way, almost without trying, this initiative has been showing people the rich diversity of charisms in the Church. YouTube and Instagram guests have included a young contemplative nun, a Capuchin friar, several diocesan priests, and many lay people striving to live their vocation to holiness and the apostolate in the middle of the world, including the film director Juan Manuel Cotelo and the singer-songwriter Paola Pablo.

The frequent feedback has enabled them to broaden the content and adapt it to the needs of the audience. In one of the messages received, a mother said that she was using the videos as part of the family’s catechesis since her children had

difficulty attending the one in the parish. In another case, a young man thanked them for the enthusiasm and openness with which the people interviewed spoke about God. This has helped him to renew his Christian life after years of being away from the Church.

Deepening the roots

“The initiative has continued to grow,” says Ramon, “but more than increasing the number of subscribers, we want people to go more deeply into their faith.

Therefore we have created new content besides continuing with the interviews. A short time back we started the section *Your Vocation in a Minute*, with short videos where each person tells in first person the story of their own vocation and what it has meant in their life. Another project is to make theology more accessible to the public by taking advantage of

topics of current interest. We raise questions being debated today and help people to reflect on them from a theological standpoint. So we have called it *Through the Eyeglasses of Theology.*”

“After almost two years of effort,” Ramon concludes, “what began as a great idea during the confinement has now spread its roots and is growing. In sharing with others our concerns and reflections, we have been able not only to get the project going but also overcome the difficulties that have appeared along the way. Pope Francis’ words *cause a commotion* have helped us to understand better the saying, ‘a person who has a friend has a treasure.’ And if more than one, even better.”

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