

5 Tips from the Pope on the Internet and TV

During a recent encounter with young people in Sarajevo, Pope Francis gave some practical advice about the use of television, smartphones, computers, tablets....

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1. Throw away bad books and switch off harmful programs. “In this age of images, we have to do what was done in the age of books:

choose those that make me a good person." "We need to learn how to choose programs, and this is our responsibility. If I see that a program is not good for me, that it undermines good values and makes me vulgar, or has scenes that aren't clean, I have to change the channel. Just like what was done in the 'stone age,' back when I was young: when a book was good, you read it, but when it harmed you, you threw it away."

2. Flee from the slavery of computers. Fight against "bad fantasy, the fantasy that kills the soul. If you, who are young, live your life connected to the computer and become a slave to the computer, you lose your freedom. And if you seek material on the computer that is impure, you lose your dignity." Both on television and on the internet, "there are unclean things, ranging from pornography to semi-pornography."

3. Say no to trash TV. Also be careful about “empty shows that don't promote good values: for example, shows that encourage relativism, hedonism, consumerism.... We know that consumerism is a cancer in our society. I will speak about this in the encyclical that will be published at the end of this month.”

4. Computers and TV's in common areas at home. “Some concerned parents don't allow computers in their children's bedrooms.

Computers should be located in the common areas of the home. This is a small help the parents can implement" to prevent their children from being exposed to all types of bad things.

5. No family meals with the cellphone. “Being too attached to computers, to mobile phones, etc. harms the soul and takes away freedom. You become enslaved to

them. Many parents have told me that while eating at the table with their family, their children are in another world with their cellphones."

Pope Francis ended by saying: "the virtual world is a reality that we cannot ignore. We have to guide it along the right path, because it represents human progress. But when it takes us away from life in common with others, from family life, from social life, and also from sports, the arts..., and we become attached to the computer, then it's something pathological."