The 'Digital Continent': an Escape Route for a Church in Crisis ?

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Introduction

In an article about the current state of the Catholic Church in Ireland published in the Italian Jesuit magazine in January 2017, former Irish Provincial Gerry O'Hanlon wrote that the challenge for the Irish Church today was 'to re-awaken the need for salvation and the Good News of the Gospels within a culture which experiences no such need'.[1] Back in 2004, another member of the Society of Jesus writing in the *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* already warned that 'effective advertising and marketing [were] crucial' to 'develop a fresh image'[2] of the Catholic Church, one that would be more likely to 'capture the imagination of [its] customers'.[3] The emergence and growth of the Church's digital strategy in Ireland must be understood against this background, as one of many attempts to avoid paradoxically becoming what Archbishop Diarmuid Martin once called 'an irrelevant minority culture'[4] in a country where 78,3% of the population still identifiy as Catholic.[5]

However, the Vatican's and the Irish Church's discursive framing strategies as concerns the religious shaping of the Internet point in a different direction. In keeping with Heidi Campbell's analysis of the spiritualization of the Internet, four distinct discourses can be identified: the first one depicts the Internet as 'a missionary tool'; it is also 'a spiritual network', a 'worship space' and a sound base to promote and defend a specific religious identity,[6] 'A gift of God'[7] in the eyes of Pope Francis, it is finally for some a place of encounter with God. All these perceptions raise a series of theoretical questions, as does the assumption that a network of nodes and wires may finally be perceived as a new continent, designed by the creator to be conquered and evangelized.

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[1] Gerry O'Hanlon, SJ, « The Catholic Church in Ireland Today », *La Civilta Cattolica*, janvier 2017, pdf version, p. 6, http://www.jesuit.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/GOHanlon-Church-in-Ireland.pdf. Page accessed 18 September 2017.

[2] Leon O'Giollain, « The New Catholic Ireland », in *Review of Ignatian spirituality* XXXV-1, 2004, p.58.

[3] *Ibid*. p. 54.

[4] Diarmuid Martin, « Keeping the Show on the Road », « Is this the Future of the Irish Catholic Church ? » address to the Cambridge group for Irish Studies at Magdalene College, Cambridge, 22 February 2011. Quoted by Gerry Hanlon, « The Catholic Church in Ireland Today », p. 2.

[5] 2016 census.

[6] Heidi Campbell, « Spiritualizing the Internet – Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage », in *Online-Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet*, 1.1 (2005), pdf version p. 14. http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/5824/1/Campbell4a.pdf. Accessed 18 September 2017.

[7] Message of Pope Francis for the 48th World Communications Day, 1 June 2014, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20140124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html. Accessed 18 September 2017.

Nevertheless, in spite of resistances and initial smiles, the Internet has become more than a key communication channel for the Catholic Church: a potential transformational force. It has repeatedly been suggested that the impact of the digital age on religion was likely to be as revolutionary as the invention of the printing press.[8] In our day and age, it appears that the medium is in a position to influence the language of the Church, the nature of its interactions with the faithful and its understanding of time and space. Even though the official discourse is that the fundamental message doesn't change, this question too is up for discussion, at best in the long run, especially as the Church is unable to control the matrix of online culture. But in this transitional period the Catholic Church is merely seeking to seize the opportunities of the new age and respond to its challenges, while carrying out its traditional mission and trying to restore confidence.

In recent years, Archbishop Eamon Martin has been an active promoter of the digital mission of the Irish Church, both nationally and internationally. This presentation will examine the ways in which the digital strategy, understood as a pastoral but also as a marketing strategy has been implemented in Ireland. It will analyse the challenges implied by this new approach of evangelisation and wonder about the nature of the new sacred space beyond the screen. It will argue that the digital continent may be seen as a possible escape route for a Church in crisis but will suggest that the initial results of that strategy –so far as they may be assessed- are only superficially positive.

'Digital highways' and Church mission
In his seminal work on orality, literacy and the technologizing of the world, Walter Ong SJ suggests that the cultural history of humanity may be reduced to four stages in the history of human communications: orality, literacy, print culture and what he calls 'secondary orality', a post-literate, post-Gutenberg culture delivered through electronic devices and reaching much wider audiences than any of the previous communication channels.[9] In the course of history the Church proved able to derive the best advantage from each of the first three stages, which implied undeniable adjustment capacities. Thus, even if the Church sought to curb the dissemination of books it considered heretical at the time of the Reformation, it rapidly understood the huge potential of the printing press. Printing was praised as 'a divine art',[10], welcomed as 'the auxiliary of the Church,'[11] and bishops went as far as to grant indulgences to printers and booksellers.

A parallel can easily be drawn between this attitude and the contemporary enthusiasm of the Catholic Church for social media and digital communication in general. In the early

[8] See Stephen O'Leary, « Cyberspace as Sacred Space: Communicating Religion on Computer networks », *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 64, 4, 1996, pp. 781-808.
[9] Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, London and New York, Routledge, (1982) 2002. Pdf version online: http://dss-edit.com/prof-anon/sound/library/Ong_orality_and_literacy.pdf. Accessed 20 September 2017.
[10] Berthold of Henneberg, archbishop of Mainz (1442-1508).
[11] Rostock brothers, 15th century.

days of the secondary orality age, it made full use of opportunities brought by the radio and television. The *Inter Mirifica* decree promulgated in 1963 by Pope Paul VI acknowledged the modern means of social communication as 'marvellous technical inventions' conceived 'with the help of God'. Aware as he was that, just like printing, they could be both a 'divine art' and an 'infernal machine'[12] Paul VI nevertheless recommended their *proper* use 'to spread and defend the truth and foster Christian influence in human society'.[13]

More recently the Vatican has embraced the Internet, as is evidenced by the early creation of the Vatican's website in 1995, only four years after the World Wide Web became publicly available. Since then successive popes and the Vatican have issued a series of messages for annual World Communications Days, reports and official documents on the issue of Church presence online. In 2002, following the publication of two such documents, « The Church and Internet »[14] and « Ethics in Internet »,[15] John Paul II declared the Internet 'a New Forum for proclaiming the Gospel'[16] and formally chose St Isidore of Seville as its patron saint. Nine years later, Benedict XVI devoted his message for the 45th World Communications Day to « Truth, Proclamation and Life in the Digital Age », and he invited 'Christians, confidently and with an informed and responsible creativity, to join the network of relationships which the digital era has made possible ». This message echoed a 2009 address to the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, in which he 'urged its members to help communicate the teachings of the Church on the « digital continent » of the ever changing technological landscape'.[17] Since his election in 2013, Pope Francis has confirmed the Church's engagement in favour of digital media by reminding the faithful that the Internet was 'something truly good' and calling them to be more than mere 'passersby on the digital highways' so as to 'boldly become citizens of the digital world'.[18] He also offered

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[12] Elizabeth Eisenstein, *Divine Art, Infernal Machine – The Reception of Printing in the West from the First impressions to the Sense of an Ending*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. Pdf version online : https://muse.jhu.edu/book/2231. Accessed 20 September 2017.

[13] Paul VI, *Inter Mirifica*, Decree on the Media of Social Communications, 1963, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_04121963_inter-mirifica_en.html, II-17. Accessed 20 September 2017.

[14] Pontifical Council for Social Communications, « The Church and Internet », 22 February 2002, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_church-internet_en.html. Accessed 20 September 2017.

[15] Pontifical Council for Social Communications, « Ethics in Internet », 22 February 2002, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_ethics-internet_en.html. Accessed 20 September 2017.

[16] John Paul II, « Internet : a New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel », Message for the 36th World Communications Day, 12 May 2002. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20020122_world-communications-day.html. Accessed 20 September 2017.

[17] Catholic News Agency, Benedict XVI says Church needs to proclaim Gospel on the 'digital continent', http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/benedict_xvi_says_church_needs_to_proclaim_gospel_on_the_digital_continent/. Accessed 20 Septembre 2017.

[18] Pope Francis, « Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter », Message for the 48th World Communications Day, 1 June 2014,

online indulgences for the Vatican's facebook fans, twitter followers and other virtual participants of the Rio de Janeiro World Youth Day, a decision reminiscent of above mentioned Renaissance attitudes to printers. Today the Church worldwide is omnipresent online through innumerable websites, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram accounts, mobile apps, video channels on Youtube or the World Wide Web etc.

In the age of web 2.0, the Vatican's digital involvement was no doubt accelerated by one of its key 'social media gurus', bishop Paul Tighe[19], the highest ranking Irishman in the Roman Curia who was secretary of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications from 2007 until his appointment as Adjunct Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture in 2015. He generated a buzz in the spring of 2017 by contributing to the SXSW (South by South West) Digital Festival in Austin, Texas, where he defended the view that the Catholic Church ought to become a recognizable brand in digital culture by promoting 'compassionate disruption'. In his estimation, doing so was 'not just a question of customer relations or marketing, but of ensuring that the Church « can give witness and voice to the faith »'.[20] In other words, Church marketing on the internet is fully justified by its mission as explicitly defined by Vatican II.

In Ireland itself the challenge was picked up at an early date by such precursors as the Jesuit order who launched their emblematic *Sacred Space* website in the late 1990s. The Irish Bishops' Conference for its part went online in 2001. When its redesigned and updated website was launched in 2008, Cardinal Seán Brady, noted that the Internet's « potential contribution to the common good [was] limitless », and he defined the purpose of the new site as being « to inform as wide an audience as possible of the online extent of the pastoral outreach of the Catholic Church ».[21] Among other items, the new site included a link to the daily Mass reading as well as various podcasts, webcasts and live recordings of John Paul II's 1979 homilies. *Catholicireland.net* for its part was launched in 2002.

In 2014, despite the exponential development of church-related websites in Ireland since the beginning of the present century, Archbishop Eamon Martin found it necessary to reiterate the importance for the Church to develop digital communications. He also called on 'people to be online missionaries, sailing out into the « digital sea », spreading the Gospel on the « digital continent », while at the same time joining together in an online community of prayer and other commitments '.[22] In various addresses he delivered in the spring of 2017,

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https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20140124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html. Accessed 20 September 2017.

[19] Paul Tighe was ordained in Rome in 2016.

[20] Paul Tighe, « The Church in a Digital Age », Speaking Notes, Notre Dame, 19th October 2016, http://icl.nd.edu/assets/215952/ndu_text.pdf. Accessed 20 September 2017. Inside quote: *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, 3.

[21] Address by Cardinal Seán Brady, Launch of Irish Episcopal Conference Website, 22 September 2008, http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2008/09/22/cardinal-sean-brady-launches-new-website-for-the-irish-bishops-conference-wwwcatholicbishopsie/. Accessed 20 September 2017.

[22] Archbishop Eamon Martin, « The New Media and the Work of Evangelisation », address delivered at the Souls Waves Radio conference, Dublin, 19 May 2014,

Archbishop Martin justified this insistence in the specific context of contemporary Ireland, where a weakened Church must face the 'decline in practice and secularisation ', a 'damaged credibility', and 'the challenge of secularism'.[23] He defended the view that the Church had to make itself heard in the public square, if only to reassure people that it had changed and learnt the lessons of its past mistakes. He said: 'We are not there to impose, but to invite; we are not there to simply oppose, but to offer the gift and message of salvation'. [24] A new departure seems crucial to recover. In the eyes of the Archbishop, speaking into the public square today involves being active in the social media understood as one of the spaces where the public agenda can be influenced. It is not the only such space: believers must also speak in the 'boardrooms of business and industry', the worlds of arts, music, sports, education and academic research, pubs, hairdressers and so on. 'If the voice of faith is to be heard in the public square, then people of faith must inhabit and contribute to all of these worlds', Archbishop Martin argues.[25] But it is clear that church presence on the Internet is a key issue at stake for him in this perspective.

While acknowledging with Pope Benedict and Bishop Tighe that the virtual world is now part of reality[26] and that the Internet must be considered an invaluable opportunity, we may wonder at this stage if the digital environment really is a comfort zone for the Catholic Church and to what extent. It is true that it undoubtedly has positive effects. Among other obvious advantages, church practice has been facilitated, notably thanks to better accessibility to ritual; access to information and religious resources has been made much easier than ever before. Since the Internet abolishes distances, boundaries and time constraints, digital media have proved a convenient tool for evangelisation. The internet also allows people 'to communicate, and to connect in ever-widening, or perhaps even more focused networks of mutual interests'.[27] Finally, it gives visibility to the Church, which is essential. If we follow Rosalind Hackett's analysis, churches have in fact no choice since 'it has got to the point where a religious organization seems to lack credibility, even identity, without a web presence'.[28] In short, it may be argued that all things considered the Catholic Church has been a net beneficiary as a user or consumer of internet facilities.

But difficulties seem to have arisen from the possibilities offered by the second generation of the internet or Web 2.0, to use the concept coined by Irish-born Tim O'Reilly

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http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2014/05/20/the-new-media-and-the-work-of-evangelisation-archbishop-eamon-martin/. Accessed 20 September 2017.

[23] Archbishop Eamon Martin, « The Church in the Public Sphere – a perspective from Ireland », Speaking notes for the annual University of East Anglia Newman Lecture, 8 May 2017, http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2017/05/08/speaking-notes-of-archbishop-eamon-martin-for-the-annual-university-of-east-anglia-newman-lecture/. Accessed 20 September 2017.

[24] Archbishop Eamon Martin, « The Importance of speaking in the public square », Inaugural conference of the Iona Institute Northern Ireland, 25 March 2017, http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2017/03/25/the-importance-of-speaking-in-the-public-square-address-by-archbishop-eamon-martin/. Accessed 20 September 2017.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] Paul Tighe « The Church in a Digital Age ».

[27] Rosalind Hackett, « Religion and the Internet, p. 68.

[28] Rosalind Hackett, « Religion and the Internet, *Diogenes* 211, 2006, p. 69.

and his team in 2003. Progress in information technology now makes it possible 'to harness collective intelligence'[29] so as to transform internet consumers into producers of information or produsers. This implies interactivity and equal rights to defend opinions. Christopher Helland comments that as a result 'the Internet is ideally designed for many-to-many communication, which represents a form of networked interaction that is significantly different from the form of the one-to-many communication used by centralized hierarchies'.[30] Both the Catholic perception of its Truth as absolute and the authoritarian and centralized nature of the Church's organization clash with the explicitly democratic ideal of Web 2.0. We shall examine the Church's practical response to that problem later, but we may already safely argue that it is a source of difficulty from a theoretical and practical point of view.

In reality, the Internet appears as a 'cultured technology'[31], and the prevailing online culture runs counter to Catholic culture in many ways. When cybernetics was invented by Norbert Wiener in the early 1940s, it rested on the notion that being fully alive meant partaking in the communication process, receiving and transmitting information. In the eyes of its early adepts, men were no more than a channel through which information could be transmitted. Interestingly this theory gave rise to a new form of ethics: communication and information naturally led to an ideal of transparency and truth. Achieving this ideal was understood as a way to defeat the forces of evil. This ideal remained central to online culture after computers and the Internet made Wiener's utopian dream possible. The Church's tradition of secrecy obviously clashes with this culture of transparency. As exemplified by the full online publication of the reports on clerical sexual abuse in Ireland, transparency and a different perception of truth and evil have had long lasting damaging effects on the Church's public image. Yet it may be argued that this supposed transparency is far from neutral. Fuchs suggests that it is in fact the avatar of an ideology of control resting on technological determinism.[32]

Indeed the world is immersed in an 'algorithmic culture' that it is in no position to control. Algorithms are a set of instructions that determine how we gain access to online information and how this information is ranked. Discussing what he sees as today's computational theocracy, Professor of interactive computing Ian Bogost provocatively writes: 'The next time you hear someone talking about algorithms, replace the term with 'God' and

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[29] Tim O'Reilly, « What is Web 2.0 », 2005, http://www.oreilly.com/pub/a//web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html.

[30] Christopher Helland, « Online Religion as Lived Religion – Methodological Issues in the Study of Religious Participation on the Internet », Heidelberg Journals of Religions on the Internet, 1-1, 2005. Pdf version, http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/5823/1/Helland3a.pdf, p. 4. Accessed 21 September 2017.

[31] The notion of 'cultured technology' is defined by Gad Barzilai and Karine Barzilai-Nahon, « Cultured Technology: Internet and Religious Fundamentalism », in *The Information Society* 21-1, 2005.

[32] Chriistian Fuchs, *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*, London, Sage, (2013) 2017.

ask yourselves if the meaning changes'.[33] Whether or not he is right to suggest that 'science and technology have turned into a new type of theology' based on the worship of algorithms, it is clear that the Church does not control the rules of the game as simple Google search requests demonstrate. Thus on 21 September 2017 the Catholic Church in Ireland only ranked fourth, after the Church of Ireland, in a Google search results page for 'Irish Church'. A similar Google search request for 'Catholic Church in Ireland' yielded another unpleasant result: *catholicireland.net* came third in the top results, squeezed between a web page on "the state of the Catholic Church in contemporary Ireland" and a *Guardian* article entitled "The Catholic Church is 'shocked' at the hundreds of children buried at Tuam. Really?" The Irish Bishops' Conference website only ranked fifth.[34] Algorithms frame access to information and consequently influence people's choices and opinions by focusing their attention on particular topics whose importance they consequently amplify. Accessing the matrix of control is impossible and countering the effects of algorithms is difficult, as they are the property of private companies that keep them secret and make them evolve very regularly –Google for instance changes its algorithm every day.

The question of whether or not Churches in general and the Catholic Church in particular are able not only to become influential produsers but to shape the Internet must therefore be understood against the background of that overall technical and ideological framework. Yet there is evidence, well exemplified in Ireland, that in recent years the Internet has been turned into a sacred space of sorts.

The Internet: a sacred space ?

The importance of language has been crucial in the process of spiritualization of the Internet. According to Heidi Campbell the 'strong linguistic element' that is involved in 'the religious shaping of technology' is connected to a specific rhetoric that presents the technology as 'a space suitable for religious use and engagement'.[35] Pope Francis' perception of the Internet as a 'gift of God' partakes of that process. In the same way, the notion that believers may become 'digital missionaries', and bear true witness to Jesus by contributing to online Catholic presence goes a long way to asserting that the Internet is 'part of a divine mandate' that echoes the 'Christian tradition where believers are charged to « go into all the world and preach the gospel »'[36] For the same reason the Internet is considered a suitable environment for religious practices such as preaching or prayer. In the video promoting the

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[33]Ian Bogost, « The Cathedral of Computation », *The Atlantic*, 15 January 2015, file:///Users/cmaignant/Desktop/The%20Cathedral%20of%20Computation%20-%20The%20Atlantic.webarchive. Accessed 21 September 2017.

[34] Google search for Catholic Church in Ireland, 21 September 2017, https://www.google.fr/search?q=Catholic+Church+in+ireland&oq=Catholic+Church+in+ireland&gs_l=psy-ab.3..0i19k1l4.582345.587201.0.587529.26.21.0.0.0.0.306.2567.7j2j6j1.16.0....0...1.1.64.psy-ab..10.16.2566...0j0i131k1.0.dlI-zx1GCnU.

[35] Heidi Campbell, « Spiritualizing the Internet – Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage », pp. 6 and 8.

[36] *Ibid,* p. 12. Inside quote : Mark 16-15.

recently launched *myprayer.ie* website[37], archbishop Eamon Martin presents the interface as a an ideal meeting point, a portal beneath which a huge number of people are willing to join his new 'apostolate for prayer' in the hope of a new 'outpouring of the Holy Spirit' in Ireland. The Internet has become a global spiritual community of networked individuals.

Archbishop Martin also significantly describes *myprayer.ie* as a *space* on the digital highways. Describing the Internet as a 'sacramental space'[38] is part of a deliberate rhetorical strategy based on geographical imagery. As a consequence, cyberspace is no longer perceived as what it objectively is: a 'space of flows', the phrase coined by Castells to define the dynamic interaction of space and time resulting from the impact of information technology on society. [39] It is a 'third place' metaphorically referred to as a new continent to be conquered, a mission territory, a land of which one can become a citizen, a new frontier, a wild wild west to be evangelized. This presentation is definitely controversial and raises serious theoretical questions. Sarah McMillen for instance dismisses the very possibility of transporting the sacred into cyberspace. In her estimation, 'the displacement of the sacred center and its replacement into cyberspace eliminates the « place » dimensions and the natural limits and boundaries of body, place and ritual object'.[40]

Yet if there is arguably no physical place or geography on the Internet, it does not mean that there isn't a geography of sorts. Hypertext links chart paths across the seemingly limitless space of the global network and they lead to websites where a virtual sense of place is central to the reconstruction of manipulated reality. In the 1980s, Baudrillard negatively conceptualized hyperreality which, he believed, ultimately caused the destruction of reality. A more positive view of virtual reality is based on the understanding of reality as a consensual social construct legitimized by an authority. The Internet is a threshold to a different type of religious reality, one that is individualized but rests on the consensus supported by authorities that imagination and creativity may serve to unshackle fetters and to escape into a world where like-minded people may recreate a deep and sincere sense of spirituality.

In this universe, the absence of boundaries or regulations and the complete dematerialization of reality are generally compensated for by a form of virtual re-territorialization. Different models of this trend may be identified on relevant websites. One consists in substituting texts and (often) interactive audio-visual contents for landscape

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[37] *MyPrayer.ie* was launched by Archbishop Eamon Martin at the Annual Charismatic Conference in the RDS on 24 June 2017. The video can be accessed on Youtube and on myprayer.ie website: http://myprayer.ie/. Accessed 22 September 2017.

[38] Heidi Campbell, « Spiritualizing the Internet – Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage », p. 11.

[39] Manuel Castells, « Space of Flows, Space of Places : Materials for a Theory of Urbanism in the Information Age », in Stephen Graham (ed), *The Cybercities Reader*, London and New York, Routledge, 2004, pp. 82-93.

[40] Sarah Mc Millen, « The Virtual Pilgrimage – The Disappearing Body from Place to Space », in *Journal of Religion and Society* 13, 2011, pdf version, https://dspace2.creighton.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10504/64281/2011-3.pdf?sequence=1, p.3. Accessed 22 September 2017.

memories. A second method involves explicitly connecting the website to a cultural and religious tradition. Yet another method that proves quite successful in Ireland is live streaming, as in the case of Redemptoristines of Dublin, an enclosed contemplative monastery of nuns, that have simply placed a webcam in their oratory.[41] The last technique involves the creation of a sacred space either through an online ritual or by showing on the computer screen the image of a place reminiscent of religious practice, a church, a chapel or any form of altar. In *Sacred Space*, the international online prayer site created by the Irish Jesuits, the very name of the site suggests that the homepage itself is a portal to a sacred cyberspace. As Cheryl Casey demonstrates, 'the attribution of sacrality is a social construction, the space itself is neutral, but can be socially constructed as sacred'. But what is interesting is that it actually seems essential to enter 'a specifically designated spatial zone' to gain access to a form of religious experience on the Internet.[42]

It may in fact be argued that the Internet facilitates spiritual experiences. *Sacred Space* feedback reminds the reader of Jennifer Cobb's assumption in *Cybergrace*, that the Internet leads us on 'a mystical path towards the divine'.[43] One commentator writes that he feels 'the Lord is speaking directly' to him while another one notes that he 'can connect to Jesus and God'.[44] The feeling that God is present on the Internet is shared by Christians of various denominations, which has given rise to different attempts at elaborating a 'theology of the Internet'.[45] For theorists as for *Sacred Space* users, websites give the illusion that they are portals to a virtually real place. One of the prayer site visitors writes '*Sacred Space* is my quiet place where surely I will meet the Holy One'. Another talks of an 'oasis', 'a calm and peaceful space to hang out with Our Father'. Yet another sees *Sacred Space* as 'that room where I can go and encounter our Lord, anytime, anywhere'. The 'Chapel of Intentions', a distinct web page of the site is finally described as a meeting place where the user can share prayers with other people. [46] Quoting Pierre Lévy, Pierre Musso argues that cyberspace interconnections may finally 'be reduced to the intuition of a 'sense of space experienced as an enfolding environment »'. It is interesting to note that Archbishop Eamon Martin uses a similar metaphor to refer to the community beneath *myprayer.ie* website that he describes as a 'huge underblanket wrapping around the needs and intentions of those who go online'.[47] Pierre Musso adds that 'This feeling 'strangely recalls « communion », that is to say

[41] Irish nuns connect to the world via web, Youtube video, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/embed/6TU8Y9FRD5g. Accessed 25 September 2017.
[42] Cheryl Casey, « Virtual Ritual, Real Faith – The Revirtualization of Religious Ritual in Cyberspace », in *Online –Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet*, 2-1, 2006, p. 81.
[43] Jennifer Cobb, *Cybergrace: The Search for God in the Digital World*, 1998, pdf version https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234780456_Cybergrace_The_Search_for_God_in_the_Digital_World, Anstract. Accessed 22 September 2017.
[44] *Sacred Space* feedback, http://content.sacredspace.ie/feedback/. Accessed 23 September 2017.
[45] For example Jennifer Cobb, *Cyberspace*, or Lynne M. Baab, « Toward a Theology of the Internet : Place, Relationship, and Sin », in Pauline Hope Cheong, Peter Fischer Nielsen, Stefan Gelfgren et Charles Ess (eds), *Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture,* New York, Peter Lang, 2012, pp. 277-291.
[46] *Sacred Space* feedback.
[47] Archbishop Eamon Martin, http://myprayer.ie/. Accessed 22 September 2017.

communication understood   in its etymological and religious meaning of sharing or togetherness'. [48] The lived experience of *Sacred Space* users may be something similar.

Lynne Baab goes further when she suggests that cyberspace may be perceived as a 'utopian paradise', another world where eternity is reinvented. The fact that the author of the commentaries on *Living Space*, an extra web page of *Sacred Space*, is the late Frank Doyle SJ echoes this impression. So does the fact that the presenter of the Jesuit video series entitled « How to make good decisions » is the late Michael Paul Gallagher SJ. Dead men speak to the living from beyond the screen, where they have become -so to speak- eternal.

In fact, the perception of time as a whole is altered on the Internet. Castells argues that 'the space of flows dissolves time by disordering the sequence of events and making them simultaneous in the communication networks, thus installing society in eternal ephemerality'.[49] Besides, 'space organizes time'[50] and, to some extent, deritualises both. Online Masses are available all day and users can connect to prayer apps night and day across the world whenever they choose to do so.

The risk in this context is to privilege global over local facilities and online over offline religion. The Catholic Church is explicitly aware of this problem. In 2002, the Pontifical Council for Communications warned that virtual reality was 'no substitute for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the sacramental reality of the other sacraments, and shared worship in a flesh-and-blood human community'. The Vatican's position is that 'the religious experiences possible [online] by the grace of God are insufficient apart from real-world interaction with other persons of faith'. [51] As the distinction between online and offline worship tends to blur, the Church regularly reminds believers that online religion can be no more than a complement to offline religion. Parishioners must remain close to the religious activities of their parishes. As a consequence, for instance, when Archbishop Martin seeks to assess the outreach of *myprayer.ie*, he doesn't ask subscribers in which country or town they are based, but in which parish. Besides, a letter from the parish or leader of the local prayer group is requested before the subscriber's page may be activated.[52] The Church Services TV initiative is also interesting in that respect. No less than 71 churches in Ireland take part in a programme of live broadcasts of these churches 24 hours a day. There is a schedule for masses and special events but churches are literally brought to parishioners' home if they wish to remain close to real life sacramental places.

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[48] Pierre Musso, *Critique des réseaux*, Paris, PUF, 2003, kindle edition, pp. 921-922.

[49] Manuel Castells, *La société en réseaux*, tome 1 – *L'ère de l'information*, Paris, Fayard, 1996, p. 521.

[50] *Ibid.* p. 425.

[51] Pontifical Council for Culture, « The Church and Internet », 2002, II-9, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_church-internet_en.html. Accessed 23 September 2017.

[52] http://myprayer.ie/frequently-asked-questions/. Accessed 26 September 2017.

For the same reason, the Vatican was adamant in 2002 that there should be no sacraments on the Internet. In recent years, the controversy over online confessions and confession apps has reactivated the debate. When *Confession: a Roman Catholic App* was made available on ITunes at the cost of 1.59 €, the Catholic Church in Ireland issued a statement in conformity with the Vatican's stance that a smartphone application could not replace a priest despite receiving an American bishop's approval. The cause for concern was that the application offered an online step by step guide to the sacrament of penance and advised 'on suitable acts of contrition'. The spokesman for the Irish Bishops' Conference commented that only a priest could grant forgiveness and determine 'a way of repentance'. 'The sacrament can never be substituted by technology',[53] he said. By contrast, in 2016, the Church welcomed the launch of *The Catholic App* by the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh because it merely aimed at helping the faithful locate available priests for emergency confessions or at providing passersby with information about the mass schedule of the parish they were visiting.[54]

In « The Church and Internet », the Pontifical Council for Social Communications stresses the importance of 'real interpersonal community, the incarnational reality of the sacraments and the liturgy' and 'the immediate and direct proclamation of the gospel'. The centrality of incarnation and the definition of man as 'a body informed by an immortal spirit', to quote John Paul II,[55] actually raise the issue of disembodiment or of reinvented embodiment on the Internet. It is particularly relevant when such practices as virtual pilgrimages are concerned. Indeed, as Sarah MacMillen argues, 'the location of the religious is [then] transposed from its location in « body and place », to the « mind in space »'.[56] How can the transformative spiritual experience of a physical pilgrimage be transcribed in cyberspace when the physical exertions of the journey and the effective separation from everyday realities are totally absent. Justin Bailey suggests that since Christian theology is embedded with 'corporeality', 'the body and all its senses remains the creator and interpreter of substance' online, especially as cybertechnologies have become 'extensions of the human body'.[57] Recent survey based research, particularly Connie Hill-Smith's PhD thesis and publications tend to demonstrate that far from being ridiculous caricatures, virtual pilgrimages

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[53] Cian Nihil, quoting the spokesman for the Irish Bishops' Conference, « Confessions app does not have the power to absolve sins », in *The Irish Times*, 11 February 2011

[54] Cian Molloy, « New Confessional App is dubbed « Sinder »', *Catholicireland.net*, 28 November 2016, https://www.catholicireland.net/new-confessional-location-app-is-dubbed-sinder/. Accessed 23 September 2017.

[55] John Paul II, « Humans are Spiritual and Corporeal Beings », General Audience, 16 April 1986, http://inters.org/John-Paul-II-Catechesis-Spiritual-Corporeal. Accessed 24 September 2017.

[56] Sarah MacMillen, « The Virtual Pilgrimage », p. 1.

[57] Justin Bailey, « The Body in Cyberspace : Lanier, Merleau-Ponty, and the Norms of Embodiment, *Christian Scholar's Review* 45-3 p.213 and Bill Erickson, « Places of Worship : The New Religious Environment, Awkwardlypenned, 26 January 2017, https://awkwardlypenned.com/2017/01/26/places-of-worship-the-new-religious-environment/. Accessed 24 September 2017.

are perceived as fully authentic and may be experienced as 'a much more inclusive experience than a bodily pilgrimage'[58] as embodied religion is transferred online.

In his seminal analysis of a virtual pilgrimage to Ireland's Croagh Patrick, Mark McWilliams[59] suggests that the liminal or frontier nature of cyberspace explains this capacity of embodiment. He emphasizes the 'betwixt and betweenness'[60] of the electronic emptiness of computer systems. He also carefully describes how the virtual traveller can be said to go through a true religious experience as he travels the mythscape that has replaced the landscape of the real Croagh Patrick. Place dissolves into space, a simple click makes the sacred instantaneously accessible and the imagination of a disembodied pilgrim fills the void with presence. Critics of virtual pilgrimages deny the validity of such practices on account of the excessive individuation and abstraction of the sacred that they induce.[61] Yet John Paul II went on a virtual pilgrimage to Ur in Irak in 2000 and an increasing number of virtual pilgrimages are organized or recommended by the Catholic Church throughout the world, including in Ireland. This is no doubt an indication that the practice has gained in credibility however controversial it may be.

Online retreats have also developed, as have praying activities, which suggests that 'the body in prayer' may somehow be 'mediated by the machine'.[62] What is striking however is that cyberspace is ultimately used as a tool to update highly traditional terrestrial practices. We may wonder if, far from challenging conservative Catholicism, the digital highways do not tend to reinforce it by disseminating traditions and reflecting its claim to universality. If such is the case, is there a chance that Irish online audiences, particularly young people, may be captured ? Is there a chance of evangelizing cyberspace without more than cosmetic changes ?

The medium, the message and audiences

Addressing all Christian leaders in his opus on *The Social Church – A Theology of Digital Communication*, Justin Wise writes: 'Starting a Twitter account will not magically bring scores of young people through your church doors (…). Innovation isn't just a virtue, it's a requirement'.[63] Reflecting on the reception of contents by today's audiences in the specific environment of the Internet is of crucial importance, and it appears from the first that

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[58] Michael Xiarhos, « Authenticity and the Cyber Pilgrims », in *Journal of Religion & Society* 18, 2016, pdf version p. 3, https://dspace2.creighton.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10504/91849/2016-28.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y. Accessed 24 September 2017.

[59] « Virtual Pilgrimage to Ireland's Croagh Patrick », in Lorne L. Dawson and Douglas E. Gowan (eds), *Religion online – Finding Faith on the Internet*, New York, Routledge, 2004, pp. 223-238.

[60] See Victor Turner: « Betwixt and Between : The Liminal Period in Rites of Passages », in *The Forest of Symbols*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1967.

[61] For instance Sarah McMillen, « The Virtual Pilgrimage – The Disappearing Body from Place to Space ».

[62] *Ibid*. p. 7.

[63] Justin Wise, *The Social Church – A Theology of Digital Communication*, Chicago, Poody Publishers, 2014, p.12.

preserving traditions may fall short of contemporary expectations. Paul Tighe agrees that the Church 'can't always do what [it] has always done',[64] and the Catholic authorities in Ireland are aware of the necessity to modernize the image of the Church and develop an innovating strategy to make its voice more audible online. As a result, in 2015 the Archbishop of Armagh suggested the creation at St Patrick's College Maynooth of a 'quality course or an elective in theology specifically tailored for those working in the Church communications and religious affairs'.[65]

In the eyes of Paul Tighe, failing to adapt in the area of digital communication would leave the ground to those he calls 'the bullies'.[66] Indeed in the anonymous world of blogs, Facebook and twitter among other social media, violence and excess are the rule. 'The more provocative I am, the more strident, the more extreme I am in my views, the more attention I get,'[67] Paul Tighe says. In the same way, the Irish catholic primate expresses concern at the 'aggressive behaviour and offensive language' that have led social media to become 'a harsh and dehumanising environment for some'.[68] In the words of Paul Tighe, 'turning the other cheek probably never found another context where it was more relevant'.[69] This issue is all the more disturbing as Christians, including Catholics, apparently feature among the bullies. That is why the Pope stresses 'the importance of the quiet voice of reason' for fear 'debates might lead nowhere'.[70] But in his keynote address at the conference organized in Maynooth for the 40th anniversary of the Catholic Communications Office in Ireland, Bishop Tighe reminded the audience that 'Pope Benedict had said people should '« try and give the Internet a soul », not that we are the soul of the Internet.'[71] What it involves is courageous battling in a highly competitive and often hostile environment.

In an article entitled « Why the Internet is slowly strangling religion », American blogger Amanda Marcotte actually argues that the problem is not so much bullies as ' people making strong cases against the Catholic Church and religion in general'.[72] She specifically targets aggressive atheists and Mormons but religious or pseudo-religious websites have

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[64] Paul Tighe's keynote at the 3rd annual Catholic Communication Collaboration Technology Conference, Los Angeles, quoted by Chad Garland, « Vatican social media guru : Catholics should give Internet 'a soul' », *Los Angeles Times*, 13 August 2014, http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-tn-vatican-social-media-expert-20140813-story.html. Accessed 25 September 2017.

[65] Sarah McDonald, « Church must harness best of new communications », *Catholicireland.net*, 6 November 2015, https://www.catholicireland.net/primate/. Accessed 25 September 2017.

[66] *Los Angeles Times*, 13 August 2014.

[67] Quoted by Kathy Schiffer, « World Communications Day : Use Media for Good, Pope says », *Patheos*, 26 January 2013, http://www.patheos.com/blogs/kathyschiffer/2013/01/world-communications-day-use-social-media-for-good-pope-says/. Accessed 25 September 2017.

[68] Quoted by Patsy McGarry, « Catholic Primate concerned at trends in social media », in *The Irish Times*, 5 November 2015.

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] *Patheos*, 26 January 2013

[71] Quoted by Patsy McGarry, « Dublin Priest Paul Tighe appointed bishop in the Vatican », in *The Irish Times*, 19 December 2015.

[72] Amanda Marcotte, « Why the Internet is slowly strangling religion », *Salon*, 14 November 2014, http://www.salon.com/2014/11/14/why_the_internet_is_slowly_strangling_religion_partner/. Accessed 25 September 2017.

proliferated so much on the Internet that the religious market is almost limitless there. Users can pick and choose whatever religion or spirituality appeals to them most. The medium is egalitarian by essence so that the impression one gets is that religions and spiritualities embody a multiplicity of truths, creeds and rituals of equal standing.

In his essay entitled « The Challenge for the Church in a Digital Culture », Bishop Tighe writes:

> The greatest challenge to dialogue is the, often inarticulated, relativism that is so prevalent in Western culture (…). If there is no such thing as truth, as right or wrong answers, then dialogue becomes meaningless. It is a shared commitment to searching for truth, rooted in the conviction of the objectivity of truth, which gives human dialogue and debate their ultimate value – otherwise they become exercises in coercion and manipulation in which each seeks to assert his or her own view without any reference to the claims of truth.[73]

This remark does not only apply to creeds other than Catholicism. The Pontifical Council for Social Communications already noted in 2002 that the multiplicity of websites 'calling themselves Catholic' was a further problem as the Internet afforded a forum for 'eccentric doctrinal interpretations, idiosyncratic devotional practices, and ideological advocacy bearing a « Catholic » label' at variance with 'authentic positions of the Church'.[74] It also allows dissenters to voice and publicize their disgreements, which, among other things, induces the risk of 'damaging' what Rome claims is (or should be) the 'unity of the Church'.[75]

To solve this series of problems Paul Tighe believes that 'the challenge is to find a language that is appropriate' to speak 'of truth in an environment where scepticism is the norm'[76] – a difficult challenge indeed, especially as this new language is simply meant as a language of communication. He notes that the Church's 'over-reliance on texts' and their very language, which may be 'experienced as unintelligible and off-putting', has hindered communication. What is needed is a language 'rooted in the convergence of text, sound and images'.[77] In the same way the Primate of all Ireland suggested offering 'digital smiles', having a sense of humour, avoiding preachiness, trying not to be judgemental or polemical so as to implement Pope Francis' recommendation to stop proclaiming Jesus with 'funeral faces'.[78] But the question of the compatibility of contents with online culture is not raised. As Benedict XVI put it, the Gospel should be made understandable, but the Vatican's interpretation of its contents should be maintained unaltered.[79] The new approach is not meant to be one that will in any way ultimately make the traditional language of dogma evolve.

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[73] Paul Tighe, « The Challenge for the Church in a Digital Culture », ABC Net, 3 May 2012, http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2012/05/03/3494537.htm. Accessed 25 September 2017.
[74] « The Church and Internet », II-8.
[75] Paul Tighe, « The Challenge for the Church in a Digital Culture ».
[76] *Ibid.*
[77] *Ibid.*
[78] Archbishop Eamon Martin, « The New Media and the Work of Evangelisation »
[79] Catholic News Agency, Benedict XVI says Church needs to proclaim Gospel on the 'digital continent'

It is true that efforts have been made in recent years to stress the importance of listening. Pope Francis said that 'effective Christian witness is not about bombarding people with religious messages but about our willingness to be able to be available to others (…). To dialogue means to believe that the « other » has something worthwhile to say'.[80] This justifies Paul Tighe's insistance on the necessity to 'listen more attentively' to audiences instead of 'focusing on the content' of Church teaching.[81] However, if real dialogue was effectively to replace the Catholic Church's traditional monological rhetoric and from the top down communication, it would mean that the pattern of authority might have to evolve and that the legitimacy of two way interactivity would have to be fully acknowledged. There is evidence that despite the official discourse, the Church in Ireland and elsewhere is still extremely reluctant to embrace the logic of interactivity for fear of unpleasant comments and embarrassing questions. The Church is in fact caught in a vicious circle from which it is difficult to escape. The situation is all the more complex as the crisis is more serious than ever, both because there seems to be no end to revelations of church-related scandals across the world and because Catholic leaders sound completely out of touch with people.

At a meeting of Women's Ordination Worldwide Tony Flannery said that the Irish Catholic Church was 'beyond the point of redemption'. Talking about the issue of women's ordination, he claimed that parishioners 'have moved light years ahead of the bishops in attitude',[82] which makes it difficult to maintain a dialogue' with ecclesiastical authorities. Much the same could be said about the understanding of digital communications. If we are to believe Tim O'Reilly, the Internet has become the place where popular wisdom is shaped and contemporary truths are framed.[83] Supposed bottom up democracy and freedom are prerequisites of that popular wisdom. Church style top down authority and control are not part of that culture. Paul Tighe is quite conscious that 'the most profound change is not technological but cultural' and that a change of focus is necessary. His call for the brandification of the Catholic Church partakes of his strategy to reach that target. But this immediately raises the question of its possible commodification as a result.

The Irish Jesuits' online programme entitled « making good decisions » appears as a good illustration of both that strategy and its associated risks. It is a free eight step programme that aims at advising subscribers on how to make good decisions according to 'Jesuit wisdom'. Everyday for thirty days users receive emails containing texts and video clips addressing a series of relevant issues. Especially striking is how familiar its designers seem to be with contemporary marketing principles applied to digital communication in an individualistic society. Consequently it is consumer oriented. The 'customer' is constantly flattered and placed at the centre of preoccupations. There is no preachiness and the focus is on emotion rather than reason. It could be argued in fact that the communication strategy

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[80] Message of Pope Francis for the 48th World Communications Day
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] Paddy Agnew, « Priest claims Irish catholic Church 'beyond point of redemption' », in *The Irish Times*, 1 June 2016.
[83] Tim O'Reilly, « What is Web 2.0? »

seeks to appeal to the consumer by speaking his language so as to increase the likeability of the Jesuit brand. Yet when the subscriber is advised always to listen to his own desires and never to 'fear to boast his own talents', for instance, the underlying principle seems to be that it is necessary to edit the message to adapt to audiences. Even Pope Francis noted in 2014 that 'engaging in dialogue does not mean renouncing our own ideas and traditions, but the claim that they alone are valid or absolute'[84]. Giving a soul to the internet in our 'post-truth' era will be impossible unless changes are introduced, which may actually be resented by the most conservative as a form of loss of the true Catholic soul. In *Understanding Media : The Extensions of Man*, published in 1964,[85] Marshall McLuhan had already intuited that the medium in fact was the message. 'Media', he wrote, 'by altering the environment, evoke in us unique ratios of sense perception (…). When these ratios change, men change ».[86] Paul Tighe noted that Church presence online 'will only be effective' (…) if it engages 'with the values and dynamics that characterize the networks'.[87] . But success may also rest on the capacity and will of digital missionaries to convince their reticent colleagues of the necessity to move from communicational to transformational online activism.

Regarding reception, the impact of the digital strategy is difficult to assess beyond what has already been said about its merits in terms of internal communication. No overall survey has ever been carried out on that question and both media and religion studies and virtual ethnography are emergent fields of research that have not yet defined totally satisfying research methods. Any assessment is thereore tentative and relies on scanty evidence. However, the latest census results in Ireland do not seem to indicate that the Irish population as a whole is any less disaffected with the Church than before the digital strategy was launched. Tom Inglis's 2014 survey research[88] confirmed that if belief in God was still vivid and a large majority of people still described themselves as Catholics, the Church's loss of credibility had not been compensated for. *Sacred Space* feedback also shows that the number of commentaries posted from Ireland were halved between 2014 and 2016, the majority being posted from the United States. Of the 47 comments that have been posted in 2017 so far, only 2 are Irish, another very significant drop. Besides, in spite of exceptional international online activity for nearly two decades, the vocations crisis has reached a critical point in the Jesuit order in the same proportion as in other, less technologically connected sections of the Catholic Church in Ireland, where the situation is worsening. The diocese of Tuam tried to recruit priests online and ended up appointing foreigners. The Irish Jesuits for their part have launched an online programme entitled « Why would you Join the Jesuits ? » to attract new novices by a series of appealing videos. In these cases among others, it may be argued that the Internet has become a space where emergency assistance may be sought, which is far

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[84] Message of Pope Francis for the 48th World Communications Day.

[85] Marshall Mc Luhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, 1964, pdf version accessible online: http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/mcluhan.mediummessage.pdf. Accessed 26 September.

[86] Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Message, 1967, pdf version, p. 26, https://ia802302.us.archive.org/28/items/pdfy-vNiFct6b-L5ucJEa/Marshall%20McLuhan%20-%20The%20Medium%20is%20The%20Massage.pdf. Accessed 26 September 2017.

[87] Paul Tighe, « The Challenge for the Church in a digital culture ».

[88] Tom Inglis, *Meanings of Life in Contemporary Ireland*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, Chapter 7 – « Religion ».

removed from the ambitious goal of the Vatican and the Catholic authorities in Ireland. If the Church has successfully appropriated the medium for pastoral use, the marketing strategy it has developed to reach people outside its captive audience appears to have yielded limited success so far.

Conclusion

When Stephen O'Leary wrote his classic 1996 article entitled « Cyberspace as Sacred Space: Communicating Religion on Computer Networks », his purpose was 'to qualify the optimism of technology advocates by exploring potentially troubling questions about the future of religious institutions in an era of computer-mediated communication'.[89] He already wondered about 'the transformation of religious beliefs and practices' as these would be 'mediated by new technologies'[90] and as religious discourse would be reinvented 'to keep pace with modern technology'.[91] Twenty years later the Internet has proved one of the solutions chosen by the Catholic Church to remain culturally relevant, but the major problems of the incompatibilities between the medium and the message have not been solved. In Ireland, despite the success of local initiatives here and there, it is reasonable to wonder if the mass of the population has not been lost to the Church. Besides, despite all the efforts that have been made to increase Church presence online, the Catholic Church remains much more reticent to adapt to the (no longer so) new medium than other Christian churches, particularly protestant churches. The generational gap is also wider than ever in the religious and technological fields. Irish Catholic digital initiatives seem to have been successful among traditional audiences at home and abroad but there appears to be a deficit in consumers of religious contents among the younger generations of cultural Catholics. What's more, international Internet culture has permeated Church circles in Ireland as recent incidents at the seminary of Maynooth demonstrate. From the outside, a critical observer might be tempted to suggest that the grinder scandal and subsequent restriction of internet access show that in the end traditional censorship rather than self examination tends to be the natural response of the conservative institution. The same observer might also comment that past experiences indicate that censorship may prove both inefficient and counter productive in the digital age. If the Internet is an escape route for a church on trial, the rugged terrain may lead to a dangerously uncharted territory.

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[89] Stephen O'Leary, « Cyberspace as Sacred Space: Communicating Religion on Computer Networks », p.782.
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] Ibid. p. 792.