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Message of the Holy Father to participants in the SIGNIS World Congress 2022 (Seoul, 15-18 August 2022)

The following is the message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the participants in the *SIGNIS World Congress 2022*, to take place at Sogang University in Seoul from 15 to 18 August 2022, on the theme “Peace in the digital world”:

Message of the Holy Father

I send greetings and good wishes to all taking part in the SIGNIS World Congress being held this year in Seoul, combining face-to-face meetings and virtual conferences. As an international association for the Catholic communications professionals, it is fitting that you are meeting in South Korea, a land whose history of evangelization shows the power of the printed word and the essential role of the laity in the spread of the Gospel. May the story of Saint Andrew Kim and his companions two hundred years ago confirm you in your own efforts to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the language of contemporary communications media.

It is appropriate that, in these days marked by new outbreaks of violence and aggression in our world, you have chosen as the theme of your World Congress “*Peace in the Digital World*”. The digital media revolution of recent decades has proved to be a powerful means of fostering communion and dialogue within our human family. Indeed, during the months of lockdown due to the pandemic, we saw clearly how digital media could bring us together, not only by disseminating essential information, but also by bridging the loneliness of isolation and, in many cases, uniting whole families and ecclesial communities in prayer and worship.

At the same time, the use of digital media, especially social media, has raised a number of serious ethical issues that call for wise and discerning judgment on the part of communicators and all those concerned with the authenticity and quality of human relationships. Sometimes and in some places, media sites have become places of toxicity, hate speech and fake news. In meeting this challenge, SIGNIS can play an important role through media education, networking Catholic media and countering lies and misinformation. I encourage you to persevere in these efforts, paying particular attention to the need to assist people, especially young people, to

develop a sound critical sense, learning to distinguish truth from falsehood, right from wrong, good from evil, and to appreciate the importance of working for justice, social concord, and respect for our common home.

I would also encourage you to consider the many communities in our world that remain excluded from the digital space, making digital inclusion a priority of your organizational planning. In doing so, you will be making a significant contribution to the spread of a culture of peace grounded in the truth of the Gospel.

In my Message for this year's World Communications Day, I spoke of listening as the first and indispensable ingredient of dialogue and good communication, and asked journalists to develop their ability to "listen with the ear of the heart." More than to anyone else, the "apostolate of listening" belongs to you as Catholic communicators. For communication is not just a profession, but a service to dialogue and understanding between individuals and larger communities in the pursuit of a serene and peaceful coexistence.

Listening is likewise essential to the synodal journey that the whole Church has undertaken in these years. It is my hope that, in your communication, you will contribute to this process by assisting the holy and faithful people of God in our commitment to listen to one another, to the Lord's will and to grow in the awareness that we participate in a communion that precedes and includes us. In this way too, your efforts to foster *Peace in the Digital World* will help to create an ever more "symphonic" Church, whose unity is expressed in a harmonious and sacred polyphony.

Dear friends of SIGNIS, with these sentiments, I send you my prayerful good wishes for your work and for the spiritual fruitfulness of this World Congress. Upon you, your families, your colleagues and all those whom you serve, I invoke God's abundant blessings of wisdom, joy and peace. I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 15 July 2022

FRANCIS
