

Authors: Andrzej Draguła

Title: *We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to human beings.* (1 Cor 4:9, NIV). On visuality in communicating faith

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Publication order reference (First author's office address): dr hab. Andrzej Draguła, Uniwersytet Szczeciński, Wydział Teologii, al. Papieża Jana Pawła II 31, 70-453 Szczecin, Poland

Abstract: The messages for the World Days of Social Communication deal with the issue of visual communication only to a very limited extent. Despite image is equally present in communication as word and has been gaining domination lately, it has barely been taken into account by successive popes. The literature includes the notion of „iconic communication” which denotes communication via image (icon). It seems however that visuality is not only communicating via image, i.e. iconic communication (or visual communication), in which an image is a medium for passing a content. Visuality makes a significant shift from the sender to the recipient, hence making their roles relative. What has been seen is more important than what has been presented. This radical shift has consequences for the communication of faith. The tool for visual communication is no longer an icon (presentation of the ideal reality), nor a mimetic image (imitation of reality), but a screen which is a simulation of reality. The beatification painting of John Paul II is an example of abandoning the iconic thinking for the sake of the mimetic one, while a TV broadcast of the Holy Mass – an example of the domination of the simulacrum over reality. In this way the Church becomes part of the society of spectacle, and faith from hearing (*fides ex auditu*) is modified by faith from watching (*fides ex visu*). The task of the Church is to restore the balance between the two ways of gaining knowledge in faith and in the communication of faith: *ex visu* and *ex auditu*.