



Newsletter – May 2024

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Keeping pace with technology

SEE

Recently I went for a course called “Digital 101”. It was from 9am to 6pm over two Sundays. It was for seniors like me who have to keep up with the technological changes that are overwhelming us. In this case, we learnt the use of mobile applications such as Shopee, Grab, DBS PayLah, etc. I must admit that I am familiar with some of these applications before I went for the course. Nevertheless, since the fees were paid through Skillsfuture, I thought it would be good to attend the course.

Apart from attending such courses, we can also learn from our children, family members and friends about the use of the latest applications. We can also explore applications and technology on our own since we (seniors) have more time on our hands at this stage of our lives.

The reasons why we need to keep up with these modern techniques are obvious. We use our mobile phones for most of our everyday needs. In Singapore, our economy is tech-driven in many respects. We also make use of social media such as Facebook. Most correspondence is done through Email and Whatsapp. There are also many other reasons we can think of.

During the course, many seniors were still unfamiliar with even the more basic applications such as Gmail, Facebook and PayLah. Some were using their iPhone which it more difficult for them.

Does the Bible abhor technological changes? Of course it does not. Eric Sammons from catholic.com says, "In other words, technology isn't in itself morally good or evil, but the use of it can definitely be good or evil. A knife can be used to cut carrots or cut someone's throat. The internet can be used to improve one's education or to surf for inappropriate sites. So the Church doesn't condemn the use of technology but rather encourages us to use it to serve God and neighbor and improve our lives in this world." (catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/are-you-ready-for-the-singularity).

Technology is neither inherently good nor bad; it is a tool whose impact depends on how it is wielded. While it offers unparalleled benefits in terms of connectivity, access to information, and efficiency, it also presents challenges such as dependency and privacy concerns.

**Recently, Pope Francis became the first pontiff to address a Group of Seven (G7) summit on 14 June 2024, warning world leaders that technological advancement such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) must never be allowed to get the upper hand over humanity.*

The pope said AI represented a "transformation" for mankind but stressed the need for close oversight of the ever-developing technology to preserve human life and dignity.

"In the network of relationships, both subjective and community, technology cannot replace human contact, the virtual cannot replace the real and neither can social media replace the social sphere."

Causes

1. Age and literacy levels of seniors
2. The agility of the mind to absorb new ideas

Consequences

1. Some seniors are quite put off by these changes in technology. Some are under stress. Some give up.
2. Some seniors may not be able to afford to pay for the courses. To a certain extent, financial help is provided by certain sectors of the government and society.

JUDGE

Personal Reflection

1. How do I feel about the above reality?
2. Do I empathise with the struggling seniors?
3. In my family, what do I do to assist my seniors?

Christian Reflection

1. What does the Bible say about technology? What do the Vatican documents and encyclicals say about technology?
2. What is the Christian message that we should tell our seniors to encourage them in the above reality? What would Jesus tell them?

ACT

1. How can we help or encourage our senior family members in using the latest mobile applications?
2. How can we help the senior parishioners we know in our parish in educating them on the rapid technological changes?
3. How can CFMS help as a Movement in this respect?

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