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UD Teachers Religious Leaders How to Mix Technology with Theology in New Certificate Program

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DAYTON, Ohio, March 14, 1988--How do ministers and religious educators communicate the Gospel in the electronic age?

The Center for Religious Telecommunications (CRT) at the University of Dayton has started a summer certificate program in pastoral communications to help religious leaders learn how to mix technology with theology to spread the Gospel beyond the pulpit. It's the only such program in the country, according to its organizers.

"In every age churches are faced with the challenge of how to bring the Gospel message to people," said Sister Fran Trampiets, program director for CRT and coordinator of the program. "That challenge is especially great today. People must be reached with a variety of media not just the Sunday sermons, which some churches still rely heavily upon."

Entitled "Communication Technology for Church Ministry and Management," the new certificate program can be completed in a month--two weeks each summer over two consecutive summers. Ten continuing education units are required for certification. The program's instructors, all theologians, media specialists and national leaders in the field of church communications, include the Rev. Bernard Bonnot, president of the Catholic Telecommunications Network of America; the Rev. Don Kimbal, executive director of Cornerstone Media, Inc.; and Donald Norwood, director of telecommunications, Loyola University of Chicago.
Although the program focuses on the Catholic Church's use of technology, it is not designed only for Catholics, according to Trampiets.

"Most church goals are basically the same," she said. "Therefore, our programs are very applicable to other faiths. We live in a technological world that influences everything we do, and our perception of reality, our value systems, our ways of relating to people are all influenced by that electronic environment.

"Churches," she said, "have to be aware of that and be a part of the technical world and electronic environment if they're going to touch people's lives today."

Sister Angela Ann Zukowski, executive director of CRT, said the certificate program is an outgrowth of the Pastoral Communications Institute that CRT has offered each summer since the center was established in 1984.

"The numbers nearly doubled each summer," said Zukowski, "and more and more people were asking for an expanded program with in-depth study of specific areas of church use of technology, such as parish use of computers."

The introductory course, "Communicating the Gospel in the Electronic Age," June 13-18, provides an overview of communication technology and how the church is using it. Courses offered from June 20-24 are: "A Theology of Communications," "Religious Education in a Technological World," "Telecommunications Planning and Management," "CTNA Utilization in the Diocese and Parish" and "Church Use of Computers I." The cost for the introductory course is $160; all other courses are $80.

For more information about the new certificate program in pastoral communications, call (513) 229-3160 or write to Sister Fran Trampiets, SC, Center for Religious Telecommunications, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio 45469.