

# MEDIA APOSTLE

## STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is based on the 90 minute version, but can still be used with the 50 minute version. The study guide is suitable for teens and adults.

### GENERAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How did you like the film?
- What was your favorite part?
- What did you find most unique about Blessed Fr. James Alberione?
- What did you learn about the history of the Church and the media?
- Will having watched “Media Apostle” change the way you think about media? The way you use media? If so, how?

### QUESTIONS RELATED TO “MEDIA LITERACY”

**1.** In the introduction to the film, the questions are asked: “What does it mean to be human?” “How can we use media in a way that is truly human and never de-humanizing?” At the end of the film, the question is answered Alberione-style: We must answer the “God question” first, then talk about what it means to be human and the best way to use media. Discuss.

**2.** As a boy, James started off reading good books, but as a young man in the seminary, he began to misuse media and was even dismissed from the seminary! Have you had a similar experience of the power of media (for good or bad) in your life? What happened? If bad, how did you overcome? Do you have a media “strategy” for your life? If so, what is it?

**3.** After entering a new seminary and turning his life around, James was unstoppable. He still used media intensely (e.g., getting the best books for the seminary library) and reading useful books. How do you/can you use media to enrich your general knowledge, your faith? How do you/can you use media to help you understand the world we’re living in by “understanding where that world came from”?

**4.** What would you say is the difference between media content that provides:

data -- information -- knowledge -- education -- entertainment -- inspiration -- wisdom? What do you think today’s media content is heaviest on? How can you have a more balanced media content “diet”?

**5.** James felt “the urgent need of the Church to use the media” during his four hours of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament on New Year’s Eve, 1900. What do you think is the Church’s most urgent need regarding media today? What can you do?

**6.** Fr. Alberione wanted to address “social problems with Gospel solutions.” How much do you know about the Church’s “social doctrine” or “social teaching”? Can you name the 7 themes of the Church’s social teaching? (Answer: <http://tinyurl.com/7-teachings>) See also “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church,” USCCB.

### QUESTIONS RELATED TO “MEDIA LITERACY” CONT.

**7.** How can you use media to perform the 7 spiritual works of mercy? instruct the ignorant -- counsel the doubtful -- admonish the sinner -- bear with wrongs patiently -- forgive willingly -- comfort the afflicted -- pray for the living and the dead If you have media skills, how could you use them to volunteer for the Church or a worthy cause?

**8.** Fr. Alberione said: “We are not called to save the people who lived two centuries ago who had no radio, television or cinema.” (Today we would add “internet.”) Although “human nature” itself never changes, talk about how today’s media content, media technology and media culture has and is changing our lifestyles, our relationships, our family life, our bodies. Talk about strategies that individuals and groups can employ to use media in the most positive way possible. (Your strategies may be quite different from the mainstream and require a lot of discipline and courage!)

**9.** The comment is made in the film that “the prophetic point of the life of Fr. Alberione [is] placing preaching through the media at the same level as direct preaching.” This does not mean liturgical preaching during the Mass, but rather evangelizing and catechizing. Do you know people who came to Christ or a deeper conversion to Christ through the instrumentality of a book or other media? How about yourself?

**10.** St. Paul is the patron of the Catholic press. Imagine if Paul had not used the media (his letters): half the New Testament would be missing! If communication with and creating media is not your strong point, how can you still be a media missionary by promoting, sharing, passing along to others the best media you know of?

**11.** Fr. Alberione created “The Pauline Prayerbook” which contains many prayers for and about media, including a prayer of reparation for evil media. If media is the stuff of our daily lives and we are media people: How do you pray for the media? About media? About your own media

use? If not, how could you include prayer about media into your regular prayer?

**12.** “Religious art is the fiery language of the Holy Spirit.” “Many souls hungry for light, nostalgic for the true, the good and the beautiful have found God at the sight of...a temple...a religious painting...the notes of...a solemn Mass” --Fr. Alberione. How does art help you find God? Where have you found God in art?

**13.** Fr. Alberione said “give the charity of the truth,” and “the truth is the greatest charity.” And as St. Paul says: “the truth in charity.” Without truth, there is no charity. Without charity, there is no truth. “Charity” without truth is false compassion and does harm by allowing a person to be self-destructive. “Truth” without charity can be harsh and wounding. What are examples in today’s media of the two extremes (truth and charity separated) and examples of “the truth in charity”?

**14.** Since the Gospel is “good news” and is the best message possible, Fr. Alberione wanted the highest quality media presenting the Gospel. What are examples today of poor quality Catholic/Christian media? What are examples today of high quality Catholic/Christian media? Why is it, or what makes it poor or high quality?

**15.** What can we do to “sanctify technology” in our everyday lives?

**16.** Are you more of a “word” person or an “image” person? Which speaks more to you and why?

### QUESTIONS RELATED TO “MEDIA LITERACY” CONT.

**17.** Fr. Alberione was a firm believer in the power of film.

*“The motion picture has a psychological and suggestive power over the human spirit, because it takes hold of the whole person and influences all his faculties: physical and spiritual.”*

*“We need to put down the scissors of censorship and pick up the camera, because the power of the cinema surpasses that of the school, the pulpit and the press, and always produces greater results.” --Fr. James Alberione*

What are some of the most powerful films you’ve ever seen? What are the most powerful “religious” films you’ve ever seen? What is a film you would like to see made? What “religious” films (life of a saint, etc.) would you like to see made?

**18.** In the film, the late Superior General of the Society of St. Paul, Fr. Silvio Sassi, says: “We shouldn’t think only ‘I have to evangelize,’ but ‘I have to make myself understood.’” How would you summarize the general mentality of people today? What are the “signs of the times”? How can the Church make her teaching better understood today, especially through media?

**19.** The Catholic Church officially adopted the “Media Literacy Education” stance with regard to media in her 1992 document “Aetatis Novae” or “Dawn of New Era.” [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) In a nutshell, Media Literacy Education acknowledges that media are no longer tools that we pick up and use and then put away. Media is all-pervasive in our lives, and we are living in a media culture that must be understood and approached as a culture.

“Media” means all the aspects of media: content, technology, culture, institutions (creative/business/legal/government regulation) and audiences (consumers/collaborators/co-creators).

The document, “Dawn of a New Era” says that the Church must be an “active, listening” presence in the world of media. By “active,” it means we must engage media in every way, not stand on the sidelines. By “listening” it means we must hear the heartbeat of humanity through the media, the heartbeat of the world that God loves and that we are called to help.

Fr. Alberione said that “the Church fears ignorance and half-knowledge.” Why do we need to know as much as we can about our media culture and how it works? Is ignorance the same as innocence? If so, then what did Jesus mean by “be innocent as doves but as clever as serpents?”

How can you bring Media Literacy Education to your Catholic circles, especially young people?

**20.** James’ mother, and then God and the Church commissioned James to “Bring the light!” How are you going to bring the light? James got his strength from the Jesus in the Tabernacle. Where are you going to get your strength?

**21.** Do you find yourself “transformed” by the world/media or do you transform the world/media?

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” --Romans 12:2

**22.** How does Fr. Alberione’s life, work and thinking challenge you? How often do you ask yourself: “Where is humanity going? Humanity is like a great river flowing into eternity. Will it be saved? Towards what goal is it moving, this humanity that is continually renewing itself on the face of the earth?” --Fr. Alberione

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### FURTHER RESOURCES

#### Media Literacy Resources:

”Imagining Faith: Unearthing Seeds of the Gospel in Children’s Stories from Peter Rabbit to Harry Potter” [pauline.org](http://pauline.org)

”Our Media World: Teaching Kids K-8 About Faith and Media” (spiral bound textbook) [pauline.org](http://pauline.org)

”How To Watch Movies with Kids: A Values-Based Strategy” [pauline.org](http://pauline.org)

”Media Mindfulness: Educating Teens about Faith and Media” (spiral bound textbook) [smp.org](http://smp.org)

”Beyond the Written Word: Teaching Faith Through Art” (teen textbook) [smp.org](http://smp.org)

Aetatis Novae “Dawn of a New Era” 1992 & “Rapid Development” 2005 (John Paul II) [vatican.va](http://vatican.va)

#### Media Literacy Organizations/Conferences/Training:

NAMLE (Nat’l Ass’n for Media Literacy Education) resources and conferences [NAMLE.net](http://NAMLE.net)

PCMS Pauline Center for Media Studies certification for parents, catechists, teachers, anyone! [PaulineCMS.com](http://PaulineCMS.com)

Center for Media Literacy (Los Angeles) [MediaLit.org](http://MediaLit.org)

#### Catholic New Media Organizations:

Star Quest Productions Network [SQPN.com](http://SQPN.com)

Catholic New Media Conference [CNMC.SQPN.com](http://CNMC.SQPN.com)