

"Whoever wants to get to know God is never done learning"

Tweeting with GOD, August 12, 2015



Father Johannes can tweet endlessly with God and teens

Father Johannes (27), dressed in priest's clothing, has become a familiar sight to the participants of 4U!, a yearly teen festival of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Netherlands. Since being ordained to the priesthood fourteen months ago, he has been the youngest priest of the country. During the festival, he had a special surprise for all the teens present: they would all be gifted the book *Tweeting with GOD*. Because #TwGOD allows them to “dig for answers when they want to learn more about God”, says the chaplain.

Every year, Johannes van Voorst searches for a gift that can help festivalgoers grow closer to God. This year he selected *Tweeting with GOD*. With the help of a generous donor he was able to buy 260 books. It soon became evident how much the teens appreciated the present they had been given. “At one point I saw them walking around with both the Bible and *Tweeting with GOD* under their arm,” he says.

Endless string of questions

Why *Tweeting with GOD*? “I’ve been following *Tweeting with GOD* somewhat for the past year and apart from it being good and reliable, it’s very accessible and interactive. What I’ve noticed in conversations about the Catholic faith is that every answer to a question sparks a new question. It is often assumed that once a question has been answered, there’s nothing more to be said,

but that is not the case. Exploring the faith is a matter of continual growth. You're never done when you want to get to know God better."

New in the Netherlands

And that is why the 27-year old priest is happy with the arrival of Tweeting with GOD. "When I was a teen myself, there was nothing similar in the Netherlands. Obviously I had the catechism, but 15-year olds don't read that. The consequence of this was that during my studies for the priesthood I discovered all these riches and thought: why didn't I know this? I'm glad there is the YouCat nowadays, which is certainly good, yet rather tough to read for some people as they don't know where to start."

In-depth and manageable

This summer at 4U!, Father Johannes has had many fun conversations with teens who asked him all about God and the Catholic Church. He has also seen them enthusiastically read Tweeting with GOD. The young priest describes the book as "very manageable". "That's important because people are not used to reading long pieces of text anymore. Don't get me wrong, I am all in favour of continuous, in-depth searching, but the way you go about this is important. In Tweeting with GOD you find a short answer to a question, a longer answer and some background information, which makes it possible to digest it in little bits."

Digging on the website and in the app

Father Johannes finds the Tweeting with GOD website and smartphone app highly suitable to just "dig for something". "They allow you to click on certain phrases, leading to information on that phrase. Oftentimes, reference is made to the catechism and similar literature. What I also appreciate, is that the Facebook page makes it possible to ask new questions." In short, Father Johannes thinks the way the project Tweeting with GOD is structured allows for the faith to make its entrance in people's lives in various ways. "And that is important. Because then, the faith can become an actual part of your life."

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