

iPhone Confession App Receives Imprimatur

Developers Use Technology to Promote Sacramental Life

By Genevieve Pollock

SOUTH BEND, Indiana, FEB. 2, 2011 (Zenit.org).- A new Confession application for the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch is encouraging sacramental life through technology. Bishop Kevin Rhodes gave the first known imprimatur for this type of resource.

Patrick Leinen, developer and cofounder of Little iApps, the company that released the application, told ZENIT that "in order to respond to Benedict XVI's message from last year's World Communications Day address, our goal with this project was to offer a digital application that is truly 'new media at the service of the Word.'"

The program, "Confession: A Roman Catholic App," was developed as an aid "for those who frequent the sacrament and those who wish to return," a press release explained.

Designed for use in confession preparation, and later in the confessional itself, the application offers an examination of conscience, step-by-step guide to the sacrament, act of contrition and other prayers.

Multiple users can access password-protected profiles where they can go through the examination of conscience, checking off items that are pertinent to their confession and making personal notes.

Franciscan Father Thomas Weinandy, executive director of the Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Father Dan Scheidt, pastor of Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Mishawaka, Indiana, collaborated with the development of the text for the program.

Bishop Rhodes of Fort Wayne-South Bend gave the imprimatur for this application. Although other similar programs, such as "Mea Culpa -- Catholic Examination of Conscience for Catholics" and "iConfess -- Confession Handbook and Guide" have been created for similar use on devices such as the iPhone, this latest release is the first known application to receive an episcopal approval.

Leinen explained that "we are Catholic men who love our Church and want to be in communion with its actions," and thus "we thought, 'What better way than to receive the imprimatur from the bishop?'"

"With the imprimatur," he added, "we could allow those in the Catholic community to feel safe in knowing our app is for building upon our Church's great history and tradition, while embracing new media."

New media

The press release referenced the words of Benedict XVI in his message for the 45th World Communications Day, in which he affirmed that new media, "if used wisely, can contribute to the satisfaction of the desire for meaning, truth and unity which remain the most profound aspirations of each human being."

"Our desire is to invite Catholics to engage in their faith through digital technology," Leinen said.

He noted that "the app has already aided one man in returning to the sacrament after 20 years."

Leinen told ZENIT that the company's future plans include "looking into the possibility of converting the app for Droid users," which is "our biggest request."

"Secondly," he continued, "we would like to continue to create dynamic applications that can aid Catholics in their daily lives."

The developer affirmed: "Our tag line is: Little iApps is a mobile applications development start-up with a Roman Catholic twist. I think that rings true of us."

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On the Net:

For more information: <http://www.littleiapps.com>