

# Inculturating into the Internet:

## Reflections on *Towards Full Presence*

**ISAC**  
Initiative for  
the Study of  
Asian Catholics

### **WEBINAR - 18 Aug. 2025 - 20:00 Singapore Time**

On Pentecost 2023, the Dicastery for Communication released *Towards Full Presence*, the first official Church document that addresses the use of social media in its entirety. In this talk, Dr Theng provides a reflection on three themes emerging in the document in relation to his empirical, sociolinguistic research into Catholic social media sites.

These three themes are 1) 'God's style', 2) Semiotic Silence and 3) Space for Communities, which he illustrates with examples from his case studies of the Vatican's institutional use of social media, the social media output of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and a Facebook group founded and run by lay Catholics in Singapore. He uses the concept of inculturation as a bridge between the worlds of Catholic studies and linguistics, proposing how it can account for the intersections and overlaps between digital and Catholic culture, and where these overlaps can be observed in the fields of linguistics and Catholic studies. He concludes with reflections on the idea of 'full presence', examining sociolinguistic theory underpinning the relationship between online and offline worlds to suggest how digital contexts can represent a full presence on the part of those who inhabit them.

#### **ABOUT THE SPEAKER:**

Andre Joseph Theng is a sociolinguist and discourse analyst. He received his PhD at the University of Edinburgh. His project considered Catholic discourses on social media from the English-speaking Catholic world. He previously completed his MPhil at the School of English, The University of Hong Kong in the field of the linguistic landscape. He is broadly interested in sociolinguistics online and offline, religious discourses, and critical dimensions to language in urban contexts. Recent journal publications are in *Linguistic Landscape*, *Signs and Society*, and *Discourse, Context & Media*.

#### **RESPONDENT:**

Fr. Dr. Anthony Le Duc, SVD. Executive Director Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication, St. John's University, Thailand.

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