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Bishops to discuss role of independent Catholic media, universities

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Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in his presidential address at the U.S. bishops' semi-annual gathering, in Baltimore, said Nov. 16 that Catholic publications, universities or other organizations that insist on complete independence from their bishops are "sectarian, less than fully Catholic."

He said the bishops "have recently begun discussions on how we might strengthen our relationship to Catholic universities, to media claiming to be a voice in the church, and to organizations that direct various works under Catholic auspices."

NCR Washington Correspondent Jerry Filteau reports that these relational issues will be a main topic of discussion in a three-hour executive session the afternoon of Nov. 18, when the bishops are slated to meet alone behind closed doors.

With the proliferation of media, especially on the internet, including Catholic news services and bloggers, it is difficult to know exactly what media the cardinal is referring to.

According to Filteau, George placed his comments in the context of the bishops' role in governance as promoters and guarantors of church unity.

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