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## The pope takes to Twitter in a new language: Latin

by Maureen Fiedler

NCR Today

*The Guardian* of Great Britain headlined the story this way: "Veni, Vidi, Vici: Now the Pope is to Tweet in Latin." The pope began tweeting in Latin on Sunday.

Officials at the Vatican point out that Latin is a more concise language, more accommodating to the "140 characters or fewer" requirement of Twitter. They also report that about 2,000 people signed up immediately after this announcement to follow his Latin Twitter feed. But the pope has 2.5 million followers in the eight living languages he uses now: English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Polish, Arabic and Portuguese.

So what is the point of using a dead language? If Twitter is for communication of a message, why use a language that few people can read or understand?

It reminds me of the new translations used at Mass. Who really understands "consubstantial"?

Unfortunately, all this seems symptomatic of a deeper problem at the Vatican: communicating in a way millions do not understand. The Vatican often appears to be speaking to itself, not the larger Catholic community or world community. Twitter may be 21st-century, but the message, and now the language, is often from another age, another time.

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