

## Social media vital part of Father Catoir's ministry

By **CECILE SAN AGUSTIN**  
REPORTER

**CLIFTON** When St. Jude Media Ministry began in 1995, it started through the radio airwaves with its founder, Father John Catoir, spreading a message of joy. Father Catoir, who is a retired priest of the Paterson Diocese, would speak to callers and answer questions from his thousands of listeners, who were often lonely, desperate and had nowhere else to turn.

Now, as the ministry marks its 20th anniversary this September, the mission of St. Jude's continues through the radio and has expanded to connect with a whole new generation through social media.

With accounts on Twitter and Facebook and a daily meditation blog found at [www.messengerofjoy.com](http://www.messengerofjoy.com), Father Catoir, who will be 84 on Sept. 8, enjoys connecting with people in this modern way. He said, "I'm able to spread my message on a whole other level."

Father Catoir learned about the world of social media from his longtime friend, Patricia Martin, president of Martin Media in Dallas and former communications director for the Diocese of Dallas. Father Catoir's tweets can be found at @johncatoir. "I enjoy tweeting and interacting with people from all around the world," he said. "Sometimes I don't know how these people find me — but they find me. I'm in touch with a young mother in New Delhi, India, and I've become spiritual director for a man in Brazil. Through Twitter I have friends from all around the world including Australia and China."

St. Jude as the name of the ministry came about because of Father Catoir's early priest-

hood experience serving at Our Lady of Victories Parish in Paterson where the parish has had a St. Jude Novena once a week for more than 50 years. "After six years serving there, I saw so many miracles of healing and I became a believer. All prayer is efficacious but St. Jude is especially powerful," he said.

Currently residing in Cary, N.C., Father Catoir, who also marks the 55th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood this year, admits he misses the Paterson Diocese where he spent much of his priesthood ministry. He was ordained in 1960 and served in the Tribunal and Office of Clergy Personnel. He became chairman and director of The Christophers in Manhattan for 17 years and hosted its nationally-syndicated weekly television series, "Christopher Closeup."

He returned to the Paterson Diocese in 1995 as Director of Communications and started St. Jude Media Ministry. He then left diocesan service to become the executive director of Eva's Village in Paterson, which was founded by the late Msgr. Vince Puma. Father Catoir retired at the age of 71 but has continued to stay active with St. Jude's Media Ministry and is also a nationally syndicated

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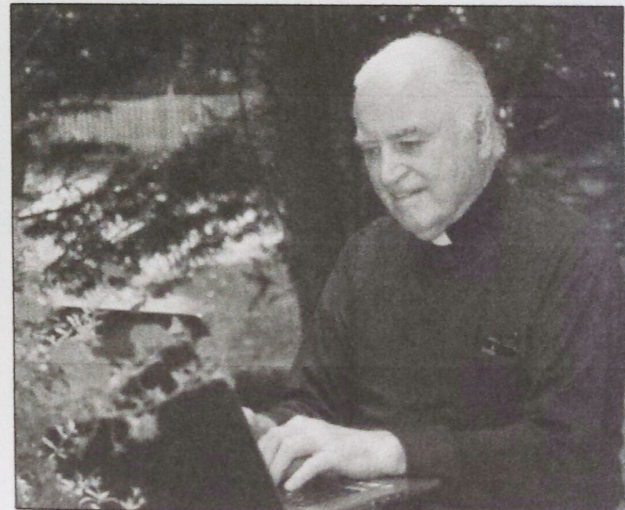
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of faith, grit, and grace."  
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**FATHER CATOIR  
TWEETS** On  
his computer,  
Father Catoir  
continues his St.  
Jude Media  
Ministry through  
social media.





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BEACON PHOTOS | JOE GIGLI

## Father Catoir: Social media vital to ministry

### FROM 4

columnist through Catholic News Service for many Catholic newspapers including The Beacon. He has also written several books.

Father Catoir said, "As long as I'm able to write, I will continue to write. I just believe I still have something to say."

When it comes to tweeting a message, often, Father Catoir said he gets inspiration and uses that thought as a tweet. "I'll write it down so I don't forget it or I wake up with these thoughts and think that would be a good tweet rather than let it go," he said.

He also quips about Twitter's 140 character limitation. "Sometimes I'll write a tweet and it'll be too long so I have to edit it down. It's given me a real discipline. That's actually good for every day life. Sometimes you have to remember the important idea of things."

While the response to his tweets have been mostly positive, there have been several moments where Father Catoir has met with an atheist or others who "troll" the Internet.

"They tend to come on very aggressively and when I come across them I think about this one woman from years back who told me one of our radio spots brought her back to the faith," he said. "I think that perhaps if they read my tweets it might be an actual grace and I can provide a light to the mind."

Through these years as a priest, he has always been motivated by the words of Jesus to Peter, which affirmed his calling to the priesthood five decades ago, and allows him to continue his ministry today. "Those words," he said, "are: 'If you love me, feed my sheep.'"

[Information: [www.johncatoir.com](http://www.johncatoir.com).]

## HEALING MASS

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 5, AT 10:30 A.M.**

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