

May 2020



ENCOUNTER!  
Meeting Jesus  
on Higher Ground.

*Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the land  
(Matt. 5:5).*

# WISDOM

from ICSC strategic partners

This month's contributions come from the following ICSC Strategic Partners:

**ACS Technologies.**



**DIOCESAN**



Each month ICSC sends you practical information, whitepapers, and tips, as well as other insightful information from our Strategic Partners to assist you with your responsibility as stewards of the Church. We are very grateful to our Strategic Partners for their partnership and commitment to ICSC, and their professional wisdom is a wonderful gift to ICSC members.

In this edition ICSC brings you:

- \* 17 tips to keep your parish healthy during COVID-19 provided by **ACS Technologies.**
- \* a diocesan guide for embracing technology to continue stewardship during COVID-19 compliments of **CCS.**
- \* three simple tips to help you increase engagement on your parish Facebook page courtesy of **Diocesan.**
- \* seven key planning ideas to prepare for the time when we begin to reengage in the movements of life presented by **Greater Mission.**
- \* planning for a better day from **OSV.**

*ICSC promotes and supports Catholic teaching on stewardship by providing education and resources for dioceses, parishes, and institutions of the Roman Catholic Church.*

# 17 Tips to Keep Your Parish Healthy During COVID-19

## 1 START A CHECK-UP NETWORK



Assign leaders to call or text individuals and families.

## 2 PUT PRAYER REQUESTS ONLINE



Create a space where people can post prayers and requests.

## 3 SEND THANK-YOU NOTES TO DONORS



Make it personal.

## 4 SET UP ONLINE & RECURRING GIVING



Encourage people to be consistent in their giving.

## 5 CREATE ONLINE EVENTS & GROUPS & TRACK PARTICIPATION:



Know what is working and what is not.

## 6 IMPLEMENT A PROCESS



Create a way for members to reach out to new parishioners.

## 7 GENERATE DIGITAL CONTENT



Make devotionals and encouraging images and videos.

## 8 OFFER CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING



Take your kids' church online with videos, worship, and crafts.

## 9 COLLABORATE REMOTELY WITH TEAMS



Keep projects top-of-mind and keep people engaged.

## 10 SHARE VALUABLE RESOURCES



Send inspiration and information to groups and teams.

## 11 STAY ON TRACK WITH DISCIPLESHIP



Lay out next steps that disciples can take from home.

## 12 GATHER ONLINE IN GROUPS



Develop community and keep growing with group discussions.

## 13 FINISH FACILITY PROJECTS



Take advantage of an empty building to get ready for gatherings.

## 14 FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Use extra time to mature and mobilize leaders.

## 15 STREAM WORSHIP SERVICES



Get your messages on social media and your website.

## 16 CONSIDER WORSHIP SERVICE FLOW



Think what will be most effective.

## 17 HAVE FUN WITH YOUTH



Meet with youth online and play games or complete challenges remotely.

## BONUS TIP

### PREPARE FOR A BIG RETURN TO NORMALCY



Get ready for what God will do when in-person meetings resume!



# COVID-19 and Catholic Giving: A Diocesan Guide for Embracing Technology to Continue Stewardship

By Brad Patterson, Corporate Vice President, CCS Fundraising — May 2020



COVID-19 has changed the way we are congregating. The lack of in-person Mass makes it challenging for pastors to connect with their faith communities. While weekly parish offertory and potentially the annual appeal can be affected negatively during this time of uncertainty, the dioceses who have a plan for how to pivot into the digital space will experience the greatest success with creating an online parish community and consequently a greater response to electronic giving. Here are two things you can start doing right now with your Parishes.

## Create an Online Offertory Page

Creating an online offertory page will provide parishioners with an easy to use process to express their gratitude for their local parish, pastor, ministry, and staff members. It is important that parishioners are given detailed instructions on how to donate online. As examples of successful pages that make giving easier for parishioners, [The Archdiocese of Detroit](#) and [The Archdiocese of Chicago](#), among others, have created universal online offertory pages where parishioners can make a donation to any parish within the Archdiocese (as opposed to or in addition to individual parishes having their own portal).

## Pivot to Online Congregations

Many dioceses have already been connecting with their communities through virtual Masses since the COVID-19 crisis began. To support parishes who haven't yet explored this option, diocesan leaders must become the "arms and legs" that help translate smart tools into ministry in action. The first step is setting up virtual meetings with each parish to share common materials, messaging tips, as well as guidance on how to utilize technology to replicate the in-person Mass. Webinars should include all pastors, business managers, and key parish leaders in partnership with the diocese.

## Examples from the Field

### 1) *Humanizing the Online Experience*

Inspired by a parish in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, parishes throughout the country have begun to ask parishioners to email photos of themselves so the pastor can print out the photos and place them in the pews as he celebrates Mass on Facebook Live. During this virtual Mass, you can see everyone's faces which creates an engaging and personal touch. Small but personal gestures can go a long way in keeping your parishioners engaged.

### 2) *Congregating Consistently*

St. Monica in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, a parish that serves over 1,100 families, provides a daily Mass on Facebook at 8am. The priests also pray the rosary once a day on Facebook. With each narrowcast, the pastors remind all of the importance of the offertory and directly ask for offertory support. St. Monica has enjoyed gifts in the \$2,000 and \$3,000 range, and at present, the parish is at its offertory target. This parish is also leading the way when it comes to quality communications and consistent offertory at the parish level for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

These tools will help dioceses and parishes in the short-term while we all adapt to the challenges brought on by COVID-19. But they will also serve your institutions in the long-term by establishing new ways to connect our parish communities.

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# Essential Tips for Facebook Engagement

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We are living in a social media age and unfortunately as the number of social networks increases, it can be easy to neglect certain aspects that could be foundational to engaging your members. Here are 3 simple tips to help you increase engagement on your parish Facebook page.

1

## HAVE A FACEBOOK PAGE

Ok this sounds funny, but we see many parishes who either don't have a page at all, have an unofficial page that has been created by Facebook, or their page has become outdated. It is important to have an up to date Facebook Page with all of your parishes information on it. Be sure to include your website, Mass times, a little info on your community, a well-designed cover photo, and your address.

2

## USE PICTURES AND VIDEOS

Make sure to engage your audience with pictures of people from your parish as well as Facebook live videos. Parishioners want to hear from real people and see stories of people just like them. When using Facebook you can reach 3x more people with a Facebook live video than a regular video. Throw up a quick video of the day-to-day at the parish, give your parishioners a tour, or take some video at the next parish picnic or event. Don't forget when using pictures and videos to consult your diocese guidelines for social media.

3

## USE EVENTS AND GROUPS

Often times we will see parishes using Facebook as just another bulletin board to get the information for events out to parishioners. While this may be moderately effective, Facebook is really meant to encourage discussion and social interaction but that doesn't mean you can't promote your events. We recommend setting up an event on Facebook for your next parish function. This allows you to invite specific people, send reminders, and let people RSVP. Groups on Facebook is a great way to keep specific groups of people in your parish up to date with the current news. For example, you can have a Confirmation Group and send reminders for events to all the members.

The number one rule for Facebook is to be attentive. If someone likes, comments, or shares a post, interact with them. This will increase your views and the likelihood that they will come back and look at your page again. We hope these tips help you to use Facebook to your best advantage for your parish. From all of us here at Diocesan, God Bless!



**Greater Mission**  
*Inspiring Faithful Charity;  
Fulfilling Church Potential.*

# RESPONDING TO THE CRISIS WITH REVENUE SOLUTIONS: SEVEN KEY PLANNING IDEAS



This challenging time of social distancing during this pandemic has had dramatic effects on how parishes operate, connect with the parish communities and celebrate the Eucharist. It has also greatly impacted the financial situation of most dioceses and parishes. Efforts have been made to provide Masses online, conduct drive thru confessions while sitting in your car, and publish Facebook live and social messages from Bishops, pastors and priests to stay as connected as possible with the parish community. The uncertainty of when we will be back to normal can be hard for many.

These extreme times have also shown the resilience and power of people and faith. The pandemic also prompts us to think about how to move forward when we begin to move out of the social distancing and re-open churches, stores, restaurants and gatherings. Greater Mission's 100+ years of experience working for the Church in serving dioceses, parishes, schools, and agencies allows us to really think about what to do to prepare for that time when we begin to reengage in the movements of life.

1. Evaluate online giving and what percentage of families are using it at the parish and diocesan level. Then develop a multi-pronged online giving enrollment campaign plan.
2. Consider a diocesan-wide offertory effort. Engaging all parishes in the process will allow the entire diocese to start to recover together. Offertory/stewardship efforts have proven to bring people closer as it fosters engagement and ownership from the parishioners. There will be a strong desire for people to get involved once the stay at home policies end.
3. Annual appeals for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 could be revised to include funds for smaller or poorer parishes as they may need more help to get back on their feet. Messaging can be adjusted and sharing formulas can be modified to respond to the crisis.
4. Establish parish partnerships in the diocese to build new bridges between your parish communities in the highest and lowest income areas.
5. Design new outreach efforts in concert with Catholic Charities and other local agencies to those who may have lost their jobs or need assistance during this pandemic. Bolstering or including funds to help these agencies to continue helping those in need will be critical.
6. If a capital campaign has recently started or is being planned, an adjustment in case elements may be required. Many dioceses are using savings or loans to help parishes survive right now and those funds will need to be replenished. Church leaders do not want to close parishes or outreach agencies, or turn the needy away.
7. Consider a new mini-campaign to build a COVID-19 Crisis Response Fund. Once the markets and economic outlooks have stabilized, some of our best major donors will want to help the Church respond to the great needs. And there will be others who will step up in ways that we have never seen before.

Great need is usually met with great response. These are seven key planning ideas that can be considered as stewardship and development professionals in collaboration with our pastoral and financial leaders to facilitate that response.



# PLANNING FOR A BETTER DAY

BY DOMINGO BETANCOURT, OSV SR. ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE



Today's environment is most challenging for parishes. No one knows what the future holds. The way parishes conduct business has changed and a "new normal" will set in.

"Social distancing" will drastically thwart how pastors and lay leaders connect with their donors and this year (2020) may very well be an unpredictable ordeal for parishes in terms of fundraising and development.

In the Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, we are reminded that **"We cooperate with God in our own redemption and in the redemption of others. We are also obliged to be stewards of the Church—collaborators and cooperators in continuing the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which is the Church's essential mission."**

Amidst the uncertainty, planning the next steps for your parish is good stewardship because you base all efforts on **"continuing the redemptive work of Jesus Christ"**.

So as you sort through your list of priorities and plot your strategy, take time to cling more tightly to God by strengthening your faith in Him. Think above and beyond the negative impacts and focus your planning for a better day.

We will not overcome fear with our own strength: we will do it by feeding our mind and spirit with the Word of God and filling ourselves with the Holy Spirit.

Take time to plan a strong and swift response to the current environment and set your sights on **laying the groundwork for a stronger and more robust 2021 and beyond**.

Yes there will be setbacks along the way and plans will be adjusted. Yes, our patience will be put to the test and our creative juices may deplete.

However, we must remember that along the way, we will need to **take time to feel His presence** and receive that wonderful peace that He gives us to continue to "collaborate and cooperate" in the mission of His Church.