

September 2020



ENCOUNTER!  
Meeting Jesus  
on Higher Ground.

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for  
they will be called children of God  
(Matt. 5:9).*

# WISDOM

from ICSC strategic partners

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

**ACS Technologies.**

**blackbaud**<sup>™</sup>  
► power your passion

**CCS**  
FUNDRAISING

**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:

- \* 4 tips for communicating to your parishioners compliments of **ACS Technologies.**
- \* 4 reasons online giving is a gamechanger provided by **Blackbaud.**
- \* a Catholic giving snapshot of the Catholic population from **CCS.**
- \* 5 considerations for staff to keep in mind when welcoming parishioners back to Mass presented by **Diocesan.**
- \* how to find the impact you make on your community presented by **OSV.**

Along with our great line up of strategic partners speaking at this year's **2020 ICSC Virtual Conference** we have several outstanding **Plenary Speakers.** Please take a look on page 7.

# 4 Tips for Communicating to Your Parishioners

Our attention span is shorter than it's ever been before. During this time your main form of communication with your parish has been digital. You have just a few seconds to capture and keep your parishioners attention. Here are four simple tips to help you communicate effectively to your parishioners.

1.

## Strategize your communication.

Make sure you know the “why” behind your communication so that you aren’t just creating and distributing content that won’t make sense to your parishioners. Come up with a strategy for all communication that needs to go out and plan to send it out accordingly.

2.

## Centralize all communication.

Make sure your parishioners know where to look for all announcements and content. This could be a landing page on your website that has all of your communication content or on your church’s app. All communication needs to be easy to access for everyone.

3.

## Make sure your communication is simple.

Most of the time it doesn’t take 15 sentences to explain what you are trying to say to your parishioners. Make sure you answer the basic questions of Who? What? When? Why? and How? Then leave it at that.

4.

## Make it clear.

Make sure all of your parishioners will understand what you are trying to say. As a general rule keep all printed communication on a third-grade reading level. After you’ve written it make sure to have someone read through it to make sure they understand what you were saying.

Plan accordingly, make sure your parishioners know where to find communications from the parish, and make it simple and clear. These simple tips will keep your communication strong during this time. What are your best tips for communicating when not everyone is coming into the parish?

Click here for thousands of Catholic resources dedicated to helping you grow the Kingdom.

# 4 Reasons Online Giving is a Gamechanger

By Amanda Kepshire

Your parish relies on the weekly offertory to keep your mission both moving forward and growing. You've been passing the basket for centuries, and it plays a significant role in the liturgy, so why consider changing it or even encourage an alternative?

## 1. Consistent offertory week-to-week

Parishioners are bound to get sick, travel out of town, attend Mass at another parish, or flat out leave their envelope on the kitchen counter. Encouraging parishioners to make the switch to online, recurring giving will ensure that your offertory remains steady, even when families aren't there in person. And now, given the amount of people who are still unable to attend Mass in person, online giving is the best way to keep weekly gifts coming in.

## 2. Plan your budget with more predictability

You probably have a pretty good idea of what your offertory total is for an average weekend. You also probably see it fluctuate depending on external factors. Maybe you experience less attendance when the weather is bad, or during certain times of the year when more people are taking the time to travel. You can expect those dips in offertory, or you can encourage your parishioner's participation in online giving to keep gifts steady, making weekend totals more predictable. In turn, you can benefit from the consistency when planning and managing your parish budget.

## 3. Young people are already digital

How many times do you hear, "we need to meet the young people where they are"? Our world is filling with more and more digital natives. They pay their credit card and utility bills online, they make their insurance payments with their phones instead of paper checks, and they even buy their groceries through an app or by tapping their phone to a little box at the register. And guess what? They're also members of your parish. They thrive on quick and easy, so make sure offertory isn't left out of their online payment routines.

## 4. You don't have to ditch the basket

Parishioners of all ages can appreciate the tradition of physically placing an envelope in the offertory basket. That physical act of giving doesn't need to be disregarded, there are a number of ways you can still incorporate the basket. Parishioners can still utilize their envelopes by writing "online giver" on the front or checking an "online giving" box and placing it in the offertory. A more sustainable alternative could be to laminate cards for online givers to pick up on the way into the church, then place in the basket as it comes around. The cards can even be reused week after week.

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### About Blackbaud

Leading uniquely at the intersection point of technology and social good, Blackbaud connects and empowers organizations to increase their impact through cloud software, services, expertise, and data intelligence. We serve the entire social good community, which includes nonprofits, foundations, companies, education institutions, healthcare organizations, and the individual change agents who support them.



# CATHOLIC GIVING LANDSCAPE

## A Snapshot of the Catholic Population<sup>1</sup>



Self-Identified  
Catholics in the U.S.

### Religious Giving is Still the Largest Philanthropic Sector by a Wide Margin<sup>2</sup>

**\$128.17 billion**

Religious giving received the largest share of dollars in the U.S.

– **29%**, twice the size of the next largest sector.

**68.5M**  
Catholics belong to  
17,007 parishes



**16.5M**  
Foreign-born  
Catholics



States that showed parish growth were in the South and the West, along with some in the Midwest. **Texas** showed the most growth with 293 new parishes, followed by **Florida** with 165.

### Why do Catholics give?



Impact  
of Gift



Religious/  
Moral  
Obligation



Giving  
Back to the  
Community

## Catholic Giving Continues to Make a Significant Impact



**1.73 million**  
students were educated  
in 6,237 Catholic schools

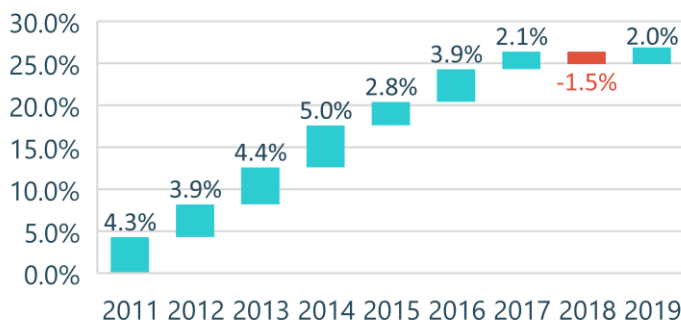


**94.5 million**  
patients were cared for  
in 541 Catholic hospitals

Catholics on average  
give \$10 or more each  
week in offertory.<sup>3</sup>

### 7 Years of Growth in Religious Giving

After seven years of growth, giving to religion declined **1.5%**.



### Online Giving is on the Rise<sup>4</sup>

Giving online to religion **increased 8%** in 2019. Online Giving made up **10%** of religious giving.

The average religious gift size was **\$211 online**.

**Mobile phones** were the most popular avenue for donors to make an **online gift**, and contrary to the belief that donors tend to restrict online giving to smaller gifts, 18% of the gifts received via mobile phone were \$1,000 or more, and roughly half were \$250 or more.

<sup>1</sup> Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2019

<sup>2</sup> Giving USA, 2019

<sup>3</sup> America: The Jesuit Review, 2020

<sup>4</sup> Blackbaud, 2019

# Communication and the Return to Mass

As parishioners start to or continue returning to Mass, communicating well is so important. There are different age ranges, digital comfort levels, and communication preferences among parishioners. It is a challenge for our parishes to meet everyone's needs. Yet, the more informed parishioners are, the more comfortable they will feel as they return to worship. Following are some considerations for parish staff to keep in mind while trying to welcome people back. From attendance requirements, to giving, to participation, clear communication is essential.

## **1 CREATE A COMMUNICATION PLAN**

Prepare your parishioners for change. After such a long time away from Mass, returning to previous routines may feel different for many. Create a communication plan, choose how, when, and where you will be communicating with your parishioner. Having consistent communications from the start can minimize the surprise and uncertainty of attending Mass again. Your parishioners will know exactly when and where to find or expect new information and will feel more prepared for the changes and expectations of coming back to Mass.

## **2 EMAIL ANALYTICS AND ONLINE GIVING**

How many will come back? Should you expect 25 or 50 percent? How do we come up with that number? Your email analytics and online giving can be very helpful in finding out a more accurate representation of how many parishioners to expect to return. You can also use this data to start crafting messages to specific groups. Those who are returning and those who may not be ready to return quite yet.

## **3 WORSHIP AIDS**

Schedule recurring emails letting your returning parishioners know where they can find worship aids for Mass. Worship aids can be posted to the parish website, in English, as well as Spanish. Parishioners can download these, print them, and bring them to Mass. For precaution, the aids should be taken home with parishioners and disposed of, not left behind for staff to throw away.

## **4 DIGITAL COMMUNICATION**

While local and state restrictions may limit the number physically present, and most of our preparations are geared toward accommodating them while at church, we must not forget those that may want to return but are unable to or have chosen not to for some reason. Continue to reach out to them and consider what types of information would be of value to them. Things like online giving, mass readings, or a digital version of your bulletin.

## **5 DIGITAL COLLECTION BASKET**

Don't let changes in Mass attendance hinder weekly collections. Make it convenient for parishioners to consider online giving options. This can be introduced and accessed through the parish website or through an App. Perhaps consider a weekly email titled "Digital Collection Basket" which explicitly asks for donations. Regardless of these digital methods for giving, many parishioners still prefer to tithe by cash or check. If this is the case, a dropbox can be placed in a convenient location.

New challenges present new opportunities to connect with people. As you work to address all the new restrictions your parish faces, remember to think creatively about how to reconnect parishioners with parish life. This may open up a chance to reach new people.

# BACK TO WHY?

BY KATIE HERZING  
OSV SENIOR PARISH COACH

Have you ever thought about **“WHY your parish exists?”** Why is there a Church on that corner? What benefit does it bring? What would be lost if it closed or never existed?

My parish has been reopened for Mass since around Memorial Day, but we are still closed for events and activities – and probably will be for a while. Many parishes are experiencing the same situation. Open for Mass at a reduced capacity, but everything else is still on hold.

So, since we've got some time, let's go down a thought-filled rabbit hole. **Why does your parish exist?** To provide the Sacraments as a way for people to encounter Christ. To celebrate Mass as a remembrance of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord as commanded at the Last Supper. To be a place where all can come together and give right worship to the Lord as the Body of Christ. To evangelize the world and spread the Good News. To care for the temporal needs of your people. All great answers.

**What would be missing from your community if your parish wasn't there anymore?** What do you provide that no one else in your area does? Do you celebrate this? Not in a “look at us, look at what we do” but in a way that says, “can you help us continue to make a difference in our community?”

**What's the importance of this now?** Well, as many parishes are struggling in the midst of the reopening, I encourage you to “Keep Your Eyes on Your Why.” This keeps us focused on what's important and keeps us relevant to our community. They continue to support us as well so we can continue to do this work.

So, this week get clear on your why and the impact you make on the community, let it be the driving force for all you do!

Gather a group of leaders at your parish (in person or virtually) to dig in to YOUR WHY. Spend the hour's meeting discussing the following questions:

- **What is our mission & purpose?**
- **Why do we exist?**
- **What can we do to ensure our parishioners are invested in our mission?**
- **What do we do in our community that no one else does?**

**OSV**

1.800.348.2886 | [www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com)

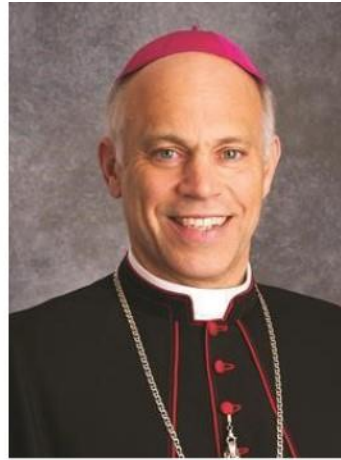
**TO SERVE  
THE CHURCH**



**THE VIRTUAL  
CONFERENCE**  
September 28 – October 9  
**ENCOUNTER!**  
Meeting Jesus on  
Higher Ground.



**ICSC is pleased to announce the Plenary Speakers for the  
2020 ICSC Virtual Conference**



**Most Reverend Salvatore Cordileone**

Archbishop of San Francisco, California

**Diana Hancharenzo**

USCCB Young Adult Ministry; St. Angela Merici, Catholic Church, Youngstown, Ohio

**Paul Jarzembowski**

Secretariat of Laity, Marriage Family Life and Youth, USCCB

**Diana Macalintal**

Catholic Author and Liturgist; Adjunct Faculty Member, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

**Most Reverend Thomas J. Olmstead**

Bishop of Phoenix, Arizona

**Julianne Stanz**

USCCB Catechesis and Evangelization; Dir, Discipleship and Leadership Development, Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin

**His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Tobin, C.S.s.R., D.D.**

Archbishop of Newark, New Jersey