



InFormation

News for Pastoral Planners and Those Making the Plan a Reality!

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Parents Value the Internet for Their Children and Themselves

70% of parents with a child under 18 at home use the Internet, compared to 53% of non-

parents. One strong incentive for parents to have Internet access is for their children. According to a study recently released by the Pew Foundation, the vast majority of parents believe that their children need to know about computers and the Internet in order to succeed. Not surprisingly, parents who do not have access are more likely than non-parents to show interest in going online eventually.

Parents are also more likely to access health, lifestyle-enhancing, and religious information

According to the survey online parents show more interest than non-parents in getting health and medical information from the Web. In addition, parents are more likely than non-parents to have used the Internet to gather **religious information**.

Parents' are more likely than non-parents:

- to do research online for school or training or research for their jobs.
- to participate in online banking.
- to use the Internet to contact a local religious organization.
- to say the Internet played a role in their finding a new place to live, dealing with a medical condition and starting a hobby.

In some other surveys, online parents were relatively enthusiastic about the way their Internet use affected their lives. In March 2001, parents' use of the Internet was found by:

- 73% to help them learn new things.
- 61% to improve the way they connect with friends.
- 52% to improve the way they connect with family members
- 42% to improve the way they shop.
- 41% to improve the way they get health care information.
- 41% to improve their ability to do their jobs.

- 22% to improve the way they manage their personal finances.
- 22% to improve their ability to find ways to deal with problems in their lives.

These parents are more enthusiastic than non-parents about technology and its benefits and are strong believers that their children need to master computers and the Internet in order to get ahead in life. Parishes that want to engage these parents more in the life of the parish may want to plan for the best way to use the Internet to do it. Most parish schools have already recognized this important communication tool.

*This article was written by Dr. Robert Miller
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Volume 7 Issue 1

- Page 1- Parents Value the Internet for Their Children and Themselves
- Page 2- Spread the Good News Of JESUS Christ "Without Fear of Technology"
- 4 Step plan to spreading the Gospel
- Page 3- Prayer for a Meeting
- Trivia Box
- 200 years as a Dioceses
- Page 4- Congregational Engagement
- A Letter to the Parish
- Page 5- Rationale for Parish Pastoral Councils

The InFormation Newsletter is published by:
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for the use of Parish Pastoral Planners and
those who implement those plans.
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These suggestions are encouraged and welcomed



**Spread the Good News
Of
JESUS Christ
“Without Fear of Technology”**

As reported by ZENIT News Agency “The World Seen from Rome”

In a message from the Holy Father to the Pontifical Council for Social Communications as reported by ZENIT His Holiness said: “The new forms of communication offer a highly favorable framework for more active participation of the public together with the media, promoting the inclusion of less fortunate sectors of the public and adapting them-

selves in a particular way to the experience of communion that is at the very heart of the Church.” To accomplish this, added the message, “it is necessary, without fear of technology, with intrepid hope and faith, to promote a joyful, creative and professional presence in television,” being “coworkers of the truth so as to offer the good news of our Lord in the multiple formats of audiovisual media, while also witnessing to the beauty of creation.”

We would like to thank ZENIT for allowing us to reprint portions of this this article.....Ed.

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Patients overwhelmingly favor the use of email to communicate with doctors. A Harris Interactive healthcare poll last year found that 81% of adults would like to email their doctors. Indianapolis Star 9.11.06 (Might parishioners favor e-malling their pastor?)

4 STEP PLAN TO SPREADING THE GOSPEL

We recently attended a Staff day as part of the Catholic Life Congress Sponsored by the Secretariat of Evangelization for Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Parish and archdiocesan staff’s attended the day.

The overriding theme of the workshop was;

”Our job as Christians is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ”. As (Lk. 3:21-23) Tells us , We are grasped by the word of God! Thus our conversion either dynamically (over a time) or dramatically (instantly) or a combination of both compels us to be sent as the Father sent Jesus to spread the good news So we are now to do the same. **“Help others to be grasped by the word”**.

The speaker **John Boucher** from the diocese of Trenton, N. J. related to us many of his life experiences and his commitment to Evangelizing. John asked us to think of someone who perhaps was not at Mass any more or had lost their enthusiasm for Christ and the church. John instructed us to pray for them each day asking God for guidance. As he might want to use us to help that individual to be renewed. That’s a little scary God using me to evangelize someone! John explained the 4 step **Prayer, Care, Share,** and **Dare** method of Evangelization :

Prayer– Intersession For all those in my daily relationships Especially the unchurched and those who have had a bad experience causing a separation with our church

- Ask God: Who is ready? What’s the next step?
- Prayer for daily opportunities to share Christ.
- Pray that we recognize those opportunities.

Care– Compassion- “The Witness of Life” (Pope Paul VI)

- Become a good listener
- Serve and use the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit
- Develop relationships
- Accept people where they are (Don’t be judgmental)

Share– Four ways of sharing Christ everyday-”The Word of life” (Pope Paul VI)

- Share a word of truth
- Prayer with a person

- Faith story or witness
- Presenting the Gospel message (Acts 2:37)

Dare– Let your word be the word- “Be not afraid” (Pope John Paul II) Step out and love others enough to share our Savior Jesus.

Dare to Invite them:

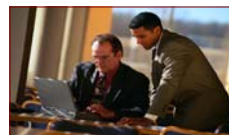
- To serve together
- To Mass or parish functions
- To make an explicit commitment to Christ (one on one, small group, large group)
- To join or rejoin the Catholic church

This seems like a good formula and I’m willing to give it a try. I would truly love to look down the pew and see all my separated friends and family participating in the Liturgy. Lets face it we have only one task in this life; to share Jesus the Christ through our words and actions whenever, wherever, and with whomever God places in our Spiritual care.

I would personally like to thank John Boucher for this reminder about the Mission of the church and every one of its members.

John said “Ask yourselves: Is what we’re doing part of an Evangelization effort? If not, why are we doing it?”

This article was written by Ron Lill based on a seminar he attended Titled The Word of God... Encounter, Embrace, Echo



**BY 2010 NEARLY HALF THE
WORKFORCE WILL BE OVER
AGE 45**

Trivia Box

How many Parishes in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia have their own website?

(answer on page 5)

THE CHURCH OF
Philadelphia

CELEBRATES BICENTENNIAL AS A DIOCESE
1808-2008



Philadelphia celebrates 200 years of service as a Diocese

The logo is an artistic interpretation of the bicentennial theme which is *Serving the People of God in the Beginning, Now and Always.*

Catholic population went from 2.5% to 32.0% in the 5 counties

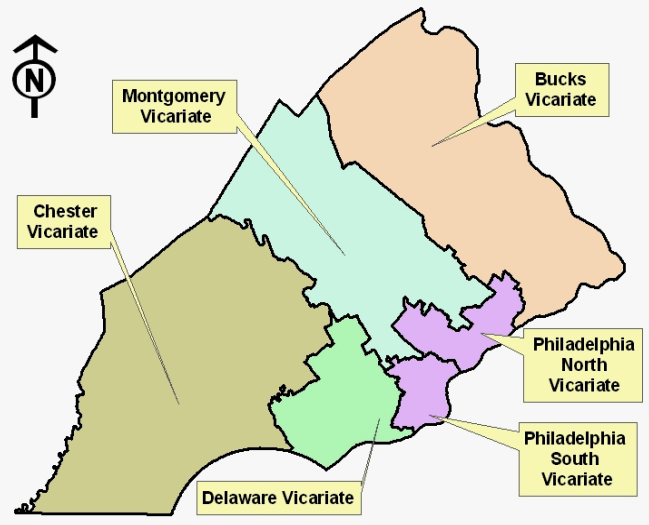
Travel back with me now to those thrilling days of yesterday when we were part of the Diocese of Baltimore (The first and only Diocese in the 13 colonies, an estimated 25,000 Catholics) In 1789 Fr. John Carroll was appointed the first Bishop of the Diocese of Baltimore. The first parish in what is now known as the Archdiocese of Philadelphia was St. Thomas the Apostle founded in 1729 a little Mission chapel in the Hills of "Ivey Mills" then later Chester Heights now Glen Mills Pa. Then in 1734 the church of St. Joseph's in Phila. was built. In 1763 St. Mary's on 4th street was completed. In 1808 Philadelphia became a diocese and our first Bishop was Michael Egan. Our first Cathedral was old St. Mary's. We were one of 4 new dioceses established (Phila., N.Y., Boston and Bardstown, Kentucky now the Archdiocese of Louisville). Our Diocese at that time included the states of Pennsylvania, Delaware and Southern New Jersey. According to records reprinted in *The History of The Archdiocese of Philadelphia - edited by James F. Connelly S.T.L., Hist., E.D.* What is now known as South eastern Pennsylvania had a Catholic population of about 8,000 or 2.5% of the total population in 1790.

Today the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is comprised of the five counties and is home to many Registered Catholics, as follows by County; (2005 Registered Population) Philadelphia (248,559), Bucks (245,054), Chester (155,084), Delaware (215,569) and Montgomery (242,648). See the Counties/Vicariates on the map. Therefore, in 2005 we had a Registered Population of 1,210,135 Catholics. Total Population in the 5 Counties (2005) 3,761,421. The percentage of Catholics has grown from 2.5% in 1790 to 32.0% in 2005 of the total population.

We sure have grown!
Ron Lill



Tom Denton the Assistant Director of the Office for Research and Planning provided much of the information for this article. Tom maintains our statistical data base and our maps for the Archdiocese



To view this map in greater detail GOTO <http://www.archphila.org/pastplan/MAPS/Arch.pdf>



Dear Lord, Source of all our strength, support each of us in this meeting that is now beginning. Grant us the courage to be open to each other and to not be fearful of the new and different. Strengthen us with a willingness to risk for the sake of Your Kingdom. It is our wish, Lord and God, that the true business of this meeting be our spiritual transformation and not simply the accomplishment of tasks and projects. We ask this in Jesus' name, as we now begin, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



Is Congregational Engagement Important?

Engagement drives everything. That is the conclusion that can be drawn from reviewing Gallup's research and development of the National Congregational Engagement Index, a set of benchmark figures that reveal

the congregational engagement level of U.S. churchgoing residents. The Index is administered on an annual basis; results have been and continue to be explored in detail in *Tuesday Briefing* and other Gallup publications. For the groundbreaking benchmark survey conducted October through November 2001, Gallup measured engagement in congregation members of every faith throughout the United States. According to Gallup the survey and subsequent analysis determined that of all congregation members in the U.S., 26% are engaged, 56% are not engaged, and the remaining 18% are actively disengaged in their congregations.

What does the initial overall snapshot look like? Gallup concludes.....

Engaged: 26%

These members are loyal and have a strong psychological connection to their church. They are more spiritually committed, more likely to invite friends, family members, and coworkers to congregational events, and give more both financially and in commitment of time.

Congregations need to develop more of these individuals.

Not Engaged: 56%

These members may attend services regularly, but they are not psychologically connected to their congregations. Their connection is more social than spiritual. They donate moderately but not sacrificially to the congregation, and if they volunteer they only donate minimal amounts of time. They are less likely to invite others into the church and more likely to leave their congregations.

Actively Disengaged: 18%

These members usually attend services only once or twice a year, if at all. They are on the membership rolls, and can tell you which congregation they belong to, but may not be able to name their congregation's leader. Some members in this group may attend services regularly, but if that's the case, they are physically present but psychologically absent. They are unhappy with their congregations and insist on sharing that unhappiness with just about everyone.

Congregational leaders need to know which category their members fall into because the Breakthrough Research on Congregational Engagement ramifications are huge in relation to outcomes such as life satisfaction, community service, inviting others, and financial giving... *Do these percentages sound correct? What action can change the numbers? How can a parish overcome the mind set of the disengaged? If you have some insight please share it. Thank you!*

*This a good example of a pastor getting the entire parish involved in the Liturgy and creating an atmosphere of community. Worshiping as one body in Christ. Thank you Tom Sweetser, SJ & Peg Bishop, OSF for sharing Fr. John's letter with us
Ron Lill -Editor*

Parish Newsletter

A Service of the Parish Evaluation Project
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Dated March, 2007

A Pastor's Letter Regarding Liturgy:



In October of 2006, Blessed Sacrament Parish in Washington, DC went through the PAR (Parish Assessment and Renewal) process. The pastor, Msgr. John Enzler wrote a letter to the parishioners that appeared in the January 21, 2007 issue of the parish bulletin. We offer it here as an example of how to translate some of the insights and discoveries of PAR into action.

Dear Friends,

As many of you remember, we were involved last fall in a fairly extensive evaluation of parish life at Blessed Sacrament. The Parish Assessment and Renewal (PAR) process included a random sample survey, input from our most active parishioners, personal interviews, a Town Hall meeting and substantial input from the staff and major advisory groups.

In the area of liturgy, three themes were consistently raised by our parishioners: a welcoming atmosphere, homilies and music. In all three areas we are trying to make a concerted effort to listen to the parishioners' concerns and respond accordingly. Input on all aspects of the liturgy is valued and appreciated.

I am sure you have noticed that we are now trying to begin all weekend liturgies with a one or two minute greeting initiated by the cantors. We have been making an effort to say "hello" to those sitting close by in the pews and I have heard very positive comments about that effort. It does not detract from the liturgy and provides people an opportunity to express a brief greeting to "neighbors in the pew" who will share the Eucharist that Sunday.

The priests and deacons have begun meeting twice a month to discuss the scriptures for the coming weeks and to share personal reflections and exegesis on the Sunday Gospels. We will continue to work together to provide an insightful reflection on the scriptures through our homilies each and every weekend.

Finally, last week we published a "favorite hymn" survey with the hopes that you would pick one up, choose your favorite songs and add a few of your own. This is an attempt to listen to our parishioners and to discern how we can become even more engaged in the liturgy through our choirs, cantors and choice of music. Also, please plan on attending the "Hymn-Sing Festival" which will be held in the church on February 7 at 7 pm.*

Keep the ideas coming and we will respond as best we can.

Father John

*The Hymn-Sing Festival is an invitation to all parishioners to gather for an evening of favorite liturgical songs. One person chooses a favorite and the accompanists play the song while all join in. Then someone else chooses a song and that one is sung. At the end of an hour or so of singing, those attending are encouraged to sing out loudly at the weekend liturgies with the promise that their favorites will be included.



Rationale for Parish Pastoral Councils



Through Baptism and Confirmation all are called to exercise both their right and responsibility to participate fully in the life and mission of the Church. This mission of the Church is rooted in the mission of Christ who commanded everyone - clergy, religious and laity - to "Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all of creation." (Mark 16:15).

This vocation of all the People of God, the community of believers in Jesus Christ, to promote the Reign of God on earth permeates the teachings and spirit of the documents of Vatican Council II. All members of the Church - laity, religious and clergy- according to their proper charisms and roles collaborate in the responsibility for fulfilling its mission. Vatican Council II urged active involvement in the life of the Church by emphasizing the principles of collaborative responsibility, consultation and lay participation.

...the laity have an active part to play in the life and activity of the Church. Their activity is so necessary within Church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is generally unable to achieve its full effectiveness.

Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 10.

Pastors also know that they themselves were not meant by Christ to shoulder alone the entire saving mission of the Church toward the world. On the contrary, they understand that it is their noble duty so to shepherd the faithful and recognize their service and charismatic gifts that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one heart.

Dogmatic Constitution On the Church, 30.

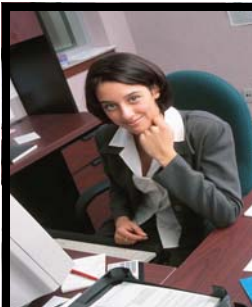
The Pastor needs to consult with the laity who in turn have the right to express their views and concerns to their Pastor. An important structure initiated to foster this collaboration in the mission of the Church by all its members is the Parish Pastoral Council. The Parish Pastoral Council assists pastors in achieving the cooperation of the parishioners and staff in the task of carrying out the mission of the Church on the parish level.

While the Parish Pastoral Council is not explicitly mentioned in the documents of Vatican Council II, the theological principles which underlie it are clearly enunciated and a rationale for its development is given.

... by reason of the knowledge, competence or pre-eminence which they have, the laity are empowered, indeed sometimes obliged, to manifest their opinion in those things which pertain to the good of the Church. If the occasion should arise, this should be done through the institutions established by the Church for that purpose and always with truth, courage and prudence and with reverence and charity towards those who by reason of their office, represent the person of Christ.

Dogmatic Constitution On the Church, 37.

This article is taken from **Rationale, principals and guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils**. One can explore the entire Booklet on line at <http://www.archphila.org/pastplan/PDF/rpgppc.pdf>



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Click on the alpha for the parish of interest then click on your parish of choice if the Parish name is in blue It's a link click and go There are over 200 parishes with a unique web site