

In+ Formation

RENEWING PARISHES

News for Pastoral Planners and Those Making the Plan a Reality

The InFormation is primarily an electronic publication and all issues can be viewed or printed



Pastoral Planning: A Pastor's Perspective *As Presented at the 2010 Catholic Congress*

Every year the Archdiocese of Philadelphia holds its annual Catholic Life Congress. It is quite uplifting to see how many Catholics give up a Saturday to attend the event and to partake of the adult training and information that is offered. We also attend a special Mass Celebrated by his Eminence Cardinal Archbishop Justin Rigali.

Integrated within the day is a tract dedicated to Pastoral Parish Councils with an emphasis on Planning and self study. THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS Program consisted of 3 sessions

1- **PCC: Orientation and Overview**, with Marti Harrington, Coordinator of Parish Pastoral Councils, This session focused on the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Rationale, Principles and Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils and answered questions based on the experiences of attendees.

2- **Pastoral Planning: A Pastor's Perspective**, With **Rev. Thomas Dunleavy**, Pastor, St. Anselm Parish, Philadelphia; **Dr. Robert Miller**, Director, Office for Research and Planning, Archdiocese of Philadelphia;

Marti Harrington,
Parish Pastoral Council Coordinator, Archdiocese of Philadelphia

This session was incredible Father Dunleavy shared his perspective with us on going through a parish planning process It was refreshing to hear about the trust and partnership between Fr. Dunleavy, the staff, and laity at St. Anselm's. I believe that this was key to a successful process. Father said that many times a council is relegated to picking paint colors for renovations and that is such a waste of professional manpower.

St. Anselm used a discernment process to select its P.P.C. and to identify persons called to the council and they use a similar process to determine length of service on the council. (To find out more about the discernment process contact Marti Harrington) They used the:

[Rationale, Principles and Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils](#) as the Council's job description and training guide. After selection, orientation and installation the council embarked on the Parish planning process. Using a couple of tools:

CHARACTERISTICS FOUND IN VITAL PARISHES

And also

Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council The entire parish was enlisted by way of parish assemblies and became the driving force and the prime resource for direction and information the council was the guide and facilitator of the process involved.

Many Parishes will be going through a planning process or revisiting and updating the plan that is in place. If there was anything to take away from this session it was;

- 1- Be sensitive to the urging of the Spirit and be prayerful.
- 2- Enlist the services of the Parish Pastoral Council
- 3- Involve the entire parish in the process
- 4- Select a vehicle to guide you through your planning

Also there is always room for adjusting and tweaking a comprehensive plan or at the very least making sure that the Parish is still on track.

We can also predict that we will more than likely be asked to update our Parish and Cluster plans in the near future

3- **Pastoral Councils: FAQs**

Rev. Thomas Dunleavy, Marti Harrington and Dr. Robert Miller, were on the panel. Free and open discussion was encouraged Everyone shared, asked and answered questions. Items of interest were: Responsibilities and training of Parish Pastoral council members also Parish self study and parish planning. The session was informative and rewarding. Over all a good day.

This article by Ron Lill, Editor

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Suggestions for future articles should be directed to
Ron Lill editor e-mail: orp@adphila.org
Phone: 1-215-587-3545

Prayer for a Meeting



Reflection:

A task that is easy, a burden that is light.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,

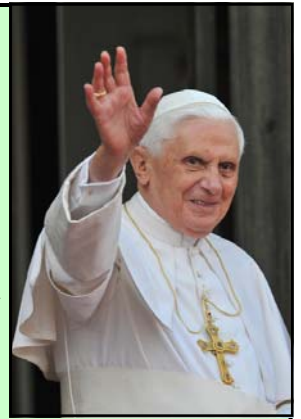
You have given your followers An example of gentleness and humility, Accept the prayers and work of this meeting, and give us the grace that will strengthen us to render more faithful service to you, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen

5 Reasons a Pastor should Blog

In his letter on ministry in a digital world, Pope Benedict XVI encouraged priests to use digital media:

Priests are thus challenged to proclaim the Gospel by employing the latest generation of audiovisual resources (images, videos, animated features, blogs, Web sites) which, alongside traditional means, can open up broad new vistas for dialogue, evangelization, and catechesis. Here are five reasons the pope gives for being active in social media:

1. Make God present in today's world
2. Present the church's wisdom
3. Offer new forms of encountering Christ
4. Help people grow in expectation and hope
5. Help people draw near to the word of God



The Philadelphia Archdiocesan Office for Research and Planning is among the 8% of online Americans on Twitter. Get all our latest research and numbers by following <http://twitter.com/PhillyCatholic>

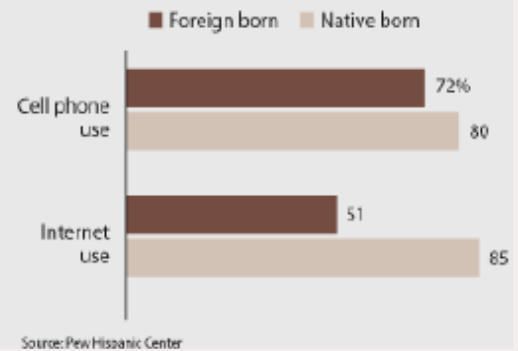


F.Y.I.

7.28.2010

The Latino Digital Divide: The Native Born Lead the Foreign Born

Native-born Latinos are more likely than their foreign-born counterparts to go online and to use cell phones, according to a new report from the Pew Hispanic Center. A second new Center report finds that among Latinos ages 16 to 25, the native born are more likely than the foreign born to use mobile technology to communicate daily with their friends.



Trivia Box

What are the Parishes in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia doing to combat hunger?

(see answer on page 5)



ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THE INFORMATION ARE AVAILABLE AT:

<http://www.archphila.org/pastplan/INDEX/InFormationindex.html>



Note:

You can print as many copies as you need. But remember to save the trees!

Has your parish or Cluster entered into a Planning Process?

Do you need a professional Facilitator? The office of Research and Planning maintains a list of trained and experienced Resource people.

Contact us at: *The Archdiocese of Philadelphia*
222 n. 17th Street Rm.216
Phila. Pa 19103

Phone 215-587-3545

[E-mail orp@adphila.org](mailto:orp@adphila.org)

Never Married rate on the rise in the U.S.



In U.S., Proportion Married at Lowest Recorded Levels

(September 2010) Marriage rates have dropped precipitously among young adults ages 25 to 34 during the past decade and the decline has accelerated since the onset of the recession, according to Pew Research Center's analysis of new data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2009 American Community Survey (ACS) and 2010 Current Population Survey (CPS). The data suggest that more young couples are delaying marriage or foregoing matrimony altogether.

Between 2000 and 2009, the share of young adults ages 25 to 34 who are married dropped 10 percentage points, from 55 percent to 45 percent, according to ACS data.¹ During the same period, the percentage who have never been married increased sharply, from 34 percent to 46 percent. In a dramatic reversal, the proportion of young adults in the United States who have never been married now exceeds those who are married.

According to the Office for Research & Planning in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia the number of Marriages witnessed by a priest went from 6,054 in 2000 to 4,010 in 2009 a drop of 33%.

Marital Status Among Young Adults Ages 25-34 (Percent)

	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009
Married	55.1	48.9	48.2	46.9	44.9
Never Married	34.5	41.4	42.6	43.9	46.3

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and American Community Survey.*

Among the total population ages 18 and older, the proportion married dropped from 57 percent in 2000 to 52 percent in 2009. This is the lowest percentage recorded since information on marital status was first collected by the U.S. Census Bureau more than 100 years ago.

A Growing Marriage Gap

Results from the Census Bureau's CPS, released in September 2010, show that the decline in marriage rates continued in 2010. Marriage rates have dropped among all major racial/ethnic groups and for both men and women. However, there are substantial differences in marriage trends by level of education. CPS data show that those with only a high school diploma (or less) have experienced a steep decline in marriage during the past decade. In contrast, marriage rates have held fairly steady for those with at least a bachelor's degree.

Between 2000 and 2010, the proportion of young adults who are married dropped 10 percentage points (to 44 percent) for those with a high school diploma or less. For those with at least a bachelor's degree, the percent married dropped only 4 percentage points, to 52 percent. This divergence in trends has led to a growing "marriage gap" between those at different ends of the educational scale.

The marriage gap used to be reversed. Prior to the 1990s, marriage rates among those with a high school diploma or less were higher than those with a four-year college education. The college-educated were more likely to postpone marriage compared with those in less-educated groups. Marriage rates today look very different, with higher proportions of young, highly educated adults entering formal unions, and a sharp drop among those with less education.

Reasons for the Decline in Marriage

Marriage used to be a near-universal phenomenon in the United States. Estimates from the mid-1960s show marriage levels of 80 percent or more among young adults ages 25 to 34. Starting in the 1970s, several factors contributed to a steady decline in marriage, including rising divorce rates, an increase in women's educational attainment and labor force participation, and a rise in cohabitation as an alternative or precursor to marriage. Although marriage rates have dropped among young adults, it is important to note that most young adults will go on to marry later in life. The probability of an adult getting married at some point during their lifetime is still nearly 90 percent.⁷

Another factor contributing to the decline in marriage rates, especially for less educated groups, is the rise in women's earnings relative to men. Family demographers point out that as women's wages have increased, fewer women rely on a spouse or partner to provide a weekly paycheck. Women now outnumber men in U.S. colleges, and [a recent report](#) by the Pew Research Center showed that there is a rapidly growing number of women who out earn their husbands.⁸ Demographer Andrew Cherlin argues that women's higher earning capacity, and the declining economic prospects of young men without a college degree, are key factors contributing to the decline in marriage in recent years.

Implications

These trends are significant because marriage is associated with many benefits for families and individuals, including higher income, better health, and longer life expectancy. One reason for these benefits may be that people with higher potential earnings and better health are "selected" into marriage, resulting in better outcomes for married couples. However, most researchers agree that marriage also has an independent, positive effect on well-being. Therefore, the recent decline in marriage may contribute to worse outcomes for less educated individuals, beyond those resulting from the recent recession.

The decline in marriage may also affect conditions for the younger generation, because of the growing number of children born to unmarried parents. In 2008, nonmarital births accounted for 41 percent of all births in the United States. Although roughly half of these non marital births are to cohabiting couples, these unions tend to be less stable and have fewer economic resources compared with married couples.¹² Therefore, declining marriage rates put more children at risk of growing up poor, which can have lasting consequences for their health and future economic prospects. Parishes can help by making all of this information available to their young adult members and their parents and continuing to support young couples as they choose marriage as their vocation.

Article adapted by Dr. Robert Miller,
Director of Research & Planning, Archdiocese of Philadelphia



Three steps toward a social media strategy for your parish

A few years ago, it would have been considered “cutting edge” for a parish to be using social media, but now everyone is doing it. So the question isn’t should parishes be using social media, but how can they use it with intentionality to support their ministry goals. Before a minister or parish committee member even sets up a Twitter account, Facebook page, or blog for the parish, they need to discern what it is they are trying to accomplish with these new media tools.

In “The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word,” Pope Benedict XVI outlined the importance of social media and the need for priests and lay people to adapt to this cultural shift. Using excerpts from the pope’s letter as a framework, this article lays out three basic steps for creating a social media strategy for a parish or ministry organization:

- Define your goals
- Meet your audience
- Build your content

1. Define your goals

“God’s loving care for all people in Christ must be expressed in the digital world not simply as an artifact from the past, or a learned theory, but as something concrete, present, and engaging.”

Before you start using social media tools, decide how you will use them to achieve the goals of your church. Use a screenwriter’s process as your model. Screenwriters do not blindly start writing, hoping to stumble across a satisfying conclusion. Rather, they plan out the movie and know how it will end before they start writing. If they know how they want the viewer to react at the end of the movie, they can write to accomplish that goal.

You can use that strategy for any kind of ministry planning. Define your goal. Who is your audience? What do you want to tell them? What do you want them to experience?

2. Meet and greet your audience

“New communication technologies...can introduce people to the life of the Church and help our contemporaries to discover the face of Christ.”

Your parish probably already has a Web site. That’s fine, but keep in mind that the people you want to reach will not necessarily be logging on at your parish site. It’s up to you to be adaptable, says a youth minister from St. Louis. “We need to meet our

target audience at baseball games and parties and picnics in addition to having them come to church buildings,” says Paul Masek, director of the REAP Team, a youth outreach ministry of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. “We need to be silly and play games with young people if we are to engage their attention so they will listen to us preach.”

Remember, the magic of social media is not in the technology. It is about the interaction that users have with each other in the digital space. Interaction is crucial. If you were at your parish donut social and only talked about yourself or events you are promoting, people wouldn’t want to talk to you anymore. The same is true online. You must build relationships and be interested in the people around you, both in real life and the digital realm.

Be intentional and authentic in everything you do.

3. Think about your content

“As new technologies create deeper forms of relationship across greater distances, they are called to respond pastorally by putting the media ever more effectively at the service of the Word.”

One of the biggest criticisms of online media is that much of it is just “noise.” Unfortunately, this can often be the case. But since this is where our audience spends their time, we are called to meet them there. Learn more about the different social media sites so you can use them strategically and with purpose.

Design your own YouTube channel to post videos of your parish event. Create your own Facebook fan page for your parish to create a common space to interact with your audience. Learn to use the tools of social media to keep your audience connected, involved, and engaged in what you are doing, and never water down the message of the Gospel. “Just because we are using new methods doesn’t mean that we have to alter the message,” says Ryan O’Hara, mission director with St. Paul’s Outreach in St. Paul, Minnesota. “In fact, we must be all the more clear, thoughtful, and intentional about the content we develop. If we don’t give them something worth sinking their teeth into, we have little hope of ever seeing them again because there are millions of other ‘messages’ vying for their attention right around the next corner.”

Social media is just a tool

Finally, don’t let social media consume your time and become overwhelming. Rather, use it to increase the quality of your interaction with your audience even when you can’t do it face-to-face. You might only see many of your parishioners once a week, but social media can help you stay connected with them for the other days and make them feel like a part of your community.

By: Jon Givens Jon Givens lives in St. Louis, Missouri. He is an active blogger for the Catholic ministry website vitamin.c.surefireorange.com, and his Twitter handle is @jongivens.



Millennial's drive their parents “2TXT”

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Credit Millennials with getting their folks to text. 20% of 55- to 64-year-olds are tapping out messages in 2008, up from 13% just two years ago, according to a Sprint study. And three quarters of those texters are messaging their kids (Market Watch 10.22.08).

Staying in touch with offspring in college drives many Boomers to write with their thumbs. So does the rapid response time: kids under 30 are four times more likely to reply to a text within minutes, compared with a voicemail message.

Text-challenged parents can get a little help from Sprint. Ready Now associates at Sprint stores take customers step-by-step through text-messaging, Web surfing and other advanced cell phone functions.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE PARISH

Miss U! Keeping tabs on kids away from home motivates Boomer parents to learn new tricks — especially when the little scholars are far more likely to reply to a message. Parishes can learn from parents how best to stay in touch with young adult parish members.

The Millennial side of the bargain is also a sweet deal. Kids with text-enabled parishes can keep it short and sweet and don't have to read long, rambling bulletin announcements that don't seem to be directed to them and still know what is going on at the parish.

Staying in touch with young adult parishioners can help them to make the transition back to parish life on college vacations, summer breaks and after graduation.

By- Dr. Robert Miller

Abstinence on Friday

(if you remember why) is Good for You as well

We always knew that the teachings of the Catholic Church were good but they are also good for you. A national campaign by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health — Meatless Monday — maintains that eating like a vegetarian just one day a week reduces consumption of saturated fat by 15%, enough to ward off "lifestyle diseases" such as heart attack, stroke and cancer.

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A Very Blessed Christmas To All!

From every one in Archdiocesan Office for Research & Planning



Mia Vergari
Parish Information
Support Staff



Dr. Bob Miller
Director



Fran Stratton
Office Manager



Tom Denten
Assistant
Director



Ron Lill
Communications



Answer Box

Hunger in the U.S. is on the rise

15,750 Catholic parishioners and staff in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia provided food programs for over 150,000 people last year.

Also In the Archdiocese :

Catholic Nutritional Development Services provided over 10 million meals last year through various school programs, before after and during hours.

A note of Welcome



Please join us in welcoming:
Mia Vergari to the Office for Research & Planning. Mia is on board to fill our new Parish Information Support Staff position. She has a Master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania in Environmental Policy and a Geography undergraduate degree from Bryn Mawr. She will be assisting with the upcoming census data reports and Geographical Information Systems, along with many other responsibilities.