

The Practice of Evangelization In Our Parishes

**Session Three
Encounter**



Opening Prayer

Loving God, you called each of us by name, and gave your only Son to redeem us. In your faithfulness, you sent the Holy Spirit to complete the mission of Jesus among us. Open our hearts to Jesus. Give us the courage to speak his name to those who are close to us, and the generosity to share his love with those who are far away. We pray that every person throughout the world be invited to know and love Jesus as Savior and Redeemer. May they come to know his all-surpassing love. May that love transform every element of our society. Amen.



Parish Invitation: Encounter

- We can think of all parish life as opportunities for encounter.
- Encounter happens on a variety of levels.
 - The essential encounter is with each person and Jesus Christ.
 - This encounter with Jesus structures our encounter with others in Christ.
- Encounter is a dimension of invitation: meeting new people and allowing them to have a space, to connect, and eventually belong.
- Invitation is institutional and personal; parishes must invite but parishioners will be the face that people see.





Encounter



The Joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. (1)

The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. (2)

Encounter

Thanks solely to this encounter – or renewed encounter – with God’s love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption. We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being. Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelization. For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?

(Joy of the Gospel, 8)





Encounter and Evangelization



It is impossible to persevere in a fervent evangelization unless we are convinced from personal experience that it is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, not the same thing to hear his word as not to know it, and not the same thing to contemplate him, to worship him, to find our peace in him, as not to. It is not the same thing to try to build the world with his Gospel as to try to do so by our own lights...

(Joy of the Gospel, 266)



Poll

Describe your parish situation (pick two):

- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban

- Less than 300 families
- 300-1,000 families
- More than 1,000 families



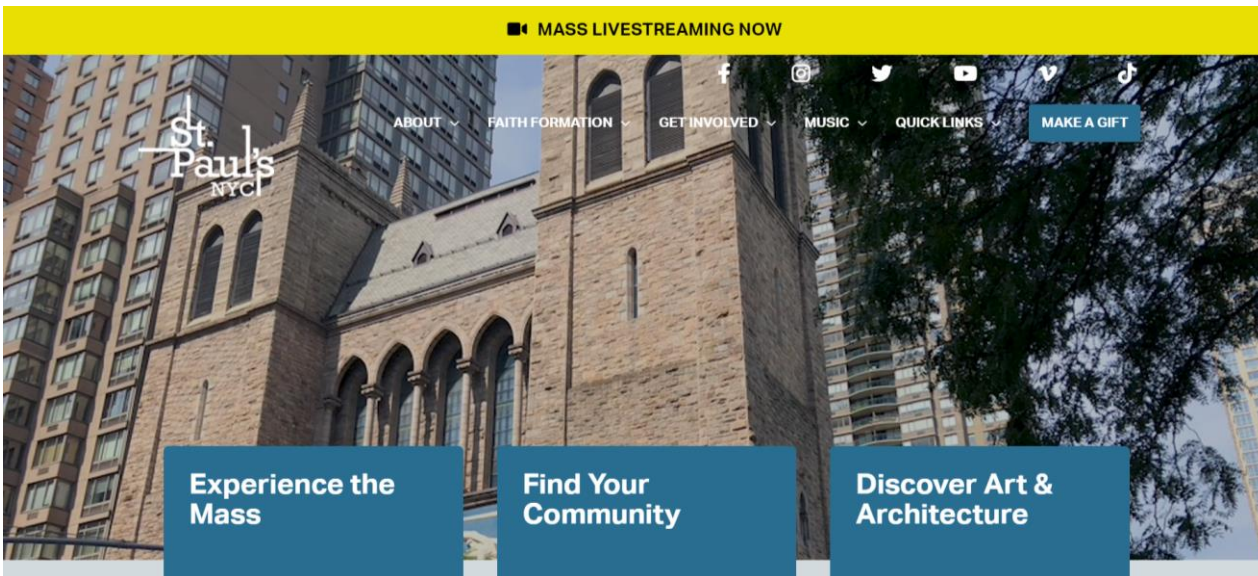
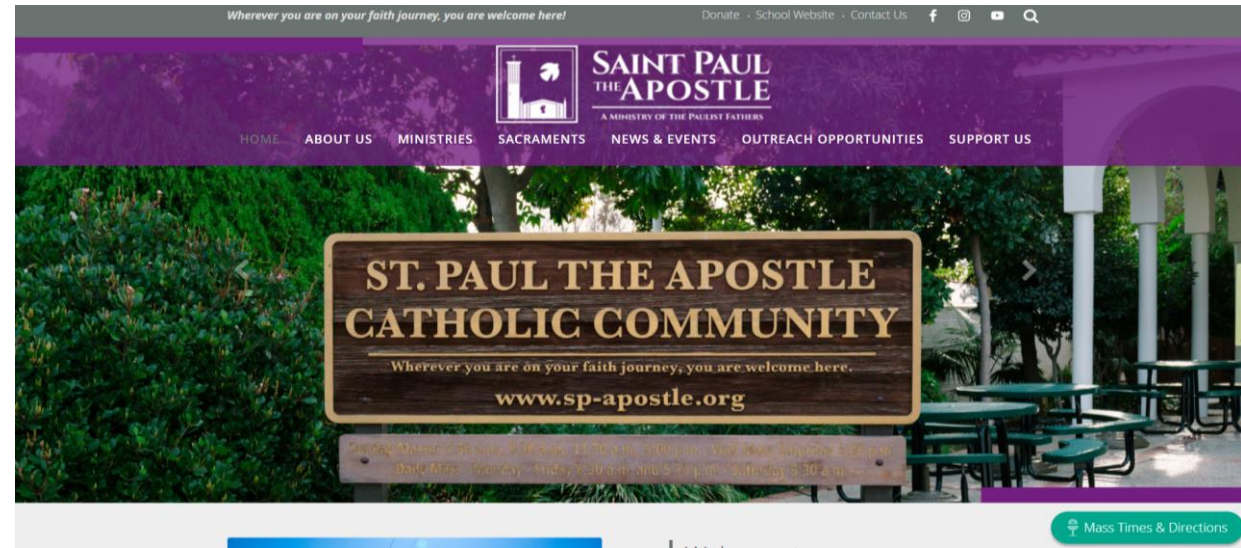
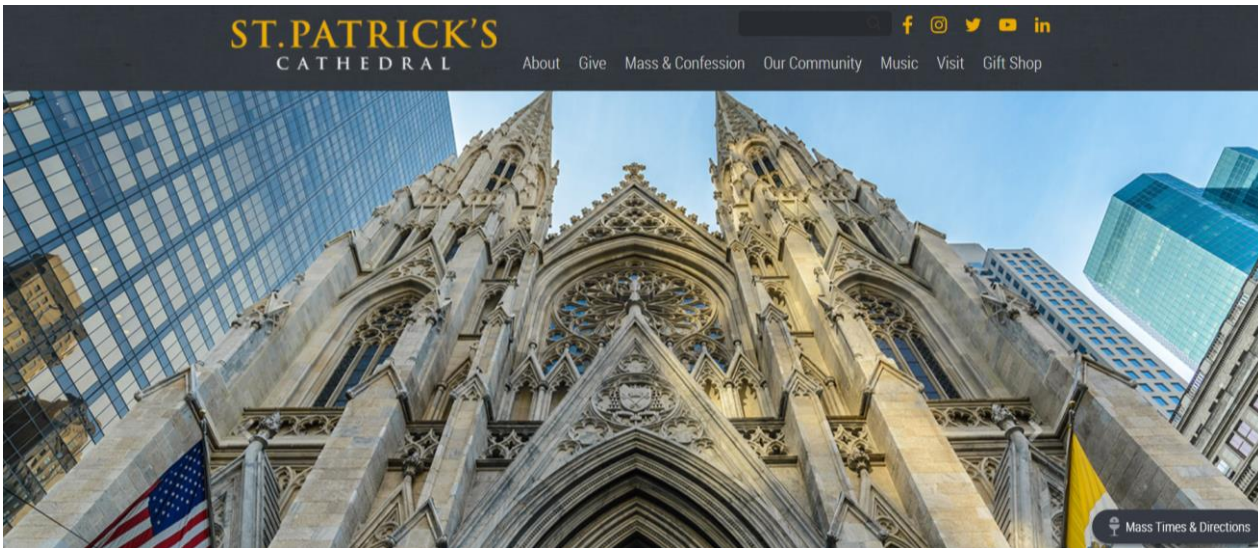
“Who” Is Inviting

Refine “brand” of parish

A readily-identifiable but unique way that people come to associate an image and graphic with a specific organization.

- How do parishioners see their parish?
- How is parish perceived in the neighborhood?
- What are parish’s natural strengths and resources of the parish?
- What makes parish attractive to others?
- What is our “look and feel”?

Look and Feel





Poll

What is the chief “graphic” of your parish? Pick one:

- Church building
- Logo or graphic depiction
- Avenue or Intersection
- Icon or Art Image
- Person(s)



What Do You Want to Say about Your Parish?


- **What image does your present “branding” send about you?**
- **What do you think might be the present “tag line” for your parish?**
- **If you could compose a new tagline, what would that be?**



Tag Line

Write a tag line:

(1) How you think your parish should present itself now to its environment?



Q&A

Use the Q&A button to write a brief tagline for your parish.



Some Basics

- Writing for folks who do not know your parish is different from writing for parishioners.
- Scrub your ideas and images for things that are “too in house” and others would not readily be able to grasp.
- Try to identify the needs of folks around you. How does your parish respond to them? Think about:
 - “Timonium Tim”
 - Parents
 - Young Adults
 - Youth and Teens





Media

- Think of the different media your parish can employ:
 - Bulletins
 - Flyers
 - Emails
 - Internet (webpage)
 - Social Media
 - Facebook, Twitter, etc.
 - YouTube
 - Person to Person



Poll

Which two media formats does your parish use most?

- Bulletins
- Flyers
- Emails
- Internet (webpage)
- Social Media
- YouTube
- Person to Person

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Peer Connections

Secret to all Evangelization:

**Every strategy we employ will
ultimately come down to
peer-to-peer communication.**



Develops Events to Invited Others

- Fun events for the neighborhood
 - Parties, picnics, seasonal events for summer Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter
- Presentations on issues that people find important
 - Neighborhood, family issues
 - Prayer services, experts, local officials
- Spiritual events
 - Parish renewals
 - Novenas
 - Public crises
- Outreach to Young Adults
 - Theology on Tap
 - Young Families
 - Small groups and social events
- “Come and See” introduction to faith and Catholicism
 - Visit our Church
 - Visit our School





Develop Ways to Connect and Invite

- Website, constant contact, emails
 - Emphasize welcome, make contact easy for people
 - Images of people, not buildings
 - Multi-multi (age, gender, nationality, race, etc.)
- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
 - Images that capture people at prime moments
 - Updates about upcoming events
 - Pictures from events and parish happenings
 - Advertise events to local community!
- Mail
 - Especially with your regular parishioners
 - New movers
 - General bulk mail
- Neighbors reaching Neighbors
- At some point, appropriate home visitation





Human and Other Media

- The lives of parishioners and disciples are the most compelling invitation to other people.
- No media will be successful without ways for people to share with other people.
- Special emphasis on welcoming visitors and newcomers to the neighborhood.
- Designate people on pastoral council and other ministries to look for new people and involve them.



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