

# Session 72: Embracing Digital Stewardship in the Parish



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## WHY ARE WE HERE?

- Stewardship as a **way of life**
- Not just through traditional ways but also through a **cooperation** with education, communication, evangelization
- In the modern world – digital media one of the most **effective** ways of communication and we must embrace this as an opportunity
- Web presence – norm
- But must build a culture of **encounters**
  - a grass-roots effort in the faith community setting created by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) that empowers men and women to actively discern their call to be missionary disciples and engage in the work of evangelization outside the church building on the peripheries, actively listening and accompanying others in a journey of faith.
- What does this mean?
  - Create not just to consume but how to **communicate**
- Authenticity required in discipleship and communication.

## EMBRACING CHANGE

- St. Pius has a history of stewardship materials and mailings that would fill a room.
- We began to digitize more heavily during Covid, but the beginnings of everything really started with some branding about a decade ago, when a parishioner's graphic design company came up with the know, love, serve logo based on our parish mission statement.

## BUILD YOUR BRAND & PRESENCE

- Logo in everything
  - Kids draw the cross
  - Fonts consistent even in different materials
- Establish your overall goals.
  - Identity, Process, Goals
- Build a professional website.
  - Wix, Wordpress, Company for Hire
- Post regularly on a blog or vlog.
  - Guest posts, pastor, etc.
- Ask for testimonials and reviews.
- Post regularly on social media.
- Consider creating a digital newsletter.
- Use SEO on your website and social platforms.
  - SEO stands for “search engine optimization.” In simple terms, SEO means the process of improving your website to increase its visibility in Google and other search engines whenever people search.
  - The better visibility your pages have in search results, the more likely you are to be found and clicked on.

- Use analytics to track your success and adjust accordingly.
  - Number of Clicks, Traffic, Demographics of Users, Videos (timing of 3-second views, lasting views, drop off times)
  - Understanding analytics can make or break your social media strategy.
  - Being able to apply findings from your social performance is imperative to seeing and maintaining growth in your accounts, regardless of platform.
  - Social media analytics can tell you a lot about who your audience is, what content connects to them most, and what you should be doing more of to see consistent success.

## WEBSITE

- Virtual FRONT DOOR
- Use your own photos! Photo galleries!
- Four Quadrants in office, and on website
- Stewardship Focus in every area.
  - F&A – DSA, Planned Giving, Online Giving
  - F&E – Youth Stewardship, Sacraments
  - P&CL – Ministries, Online Guide
  - M&L – Worship Info
  - Events & Communications – Digital Versions of things, Interactive Calendar

## SOCIAL MEDIA

- Examples of Social Media
  - Promoting Events
  - Encouraging Engagement

- Consistent Branding
- Sharing Information

## WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU?

- **Facebook**

- 77% of women; 61% of men use regularly
- 30s/40s with growing 50s+
- Although Facebook is sort of where it all began, it has changed a lot over the years. It's definitely the most likely place to find the older folks from your church, as well as young moms. One of the values of Facebook is that it offers more than just a place to post and share information. You can also form your church so that people can join and share posts within their more specific community. Create groups for women. men. small groups. children's ministry and so on. You can even push your message out through targeted marketing with Facebook which is particularly helpful when promoting parish events

- **Instagram**

- 54% of women; 39% of men use regularly
- 60% of users age 18-34 about 50/50 male/female
- This is an image-sharing app that is most popular with people in their 20s and 30s - - more particularly, women. While Instagram is not limited to that demographic, it is an important statistic to consider. Since Instagram is all about the image, it is a great spot to share photos from events and promotional graphics. Plus, the popular "Stories" feature allows

you to tap through announcements or videos to share your message.

- **X (Formerly Twitter)**

- Small usage but 60% of users age 18-44 and mostly male
- X is known for its limited space -only 80 characters - and of all the social media platforms. it is the one that men will gravitate to the most. Be concise and consistent. Retweeting is also highly popular and allows all of your followers to view.

- **LinkedIn**

- 60% of users between age 25-34 (young professionals)
- 21% between 18-24
- LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network on the internet. LinkedIn is a popular social network with a specific purpose. While other social networks like Facebook and Twitter focus more on your personal life, LinkedIn is all about professional networking—that is, building a group of contacts to help advance your career.

- **YouTube**

- 94% of all users, all ages, men/women
- YouTube is everywhere. Almost anytime you click on a video on any blog or feed, it takes you to YouTube. Creating a YouTube account for your parish is simple and offers privacy settings you can tailor to your needs (for example, you may only want church members to be able to view videos, and on YouTube, there is a privacy setting that allows this Videos can

be a great way to share personal stories. as well as to use humor to reach people. This is a great opportunity to video weekly homilies or snippets to inform parishioners about the weekend focus.

- **TikTok**

- 18-34 70% of all users about 50/50 men/women
- TikTok is a video-sharing platform that allows users to create short videos to share with their followers It is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms in the past few years and is a great way to reach the youth in your parish. These days, teenagers are more frequently scrolling TikTok than any other platform and they are quick to engage with these short videos with their attention-grabbing content.

- **Snapchat**

- 18-24, users over 25 unlikely
- Snapchat enables users to post a video or photo that will appear for a limited time before disappearing. This is an incredibly popular social media platform for teens, and if you are looking to reach your youth group via social media, don't dismiss Snapchat as an option.

- **USE WHAT FITS YOU.**

- **EXAMPLES OF SOME ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA TYPES**

- Pew Research Center

## **CONTENT**

- **Curating** – finding and developing meaningful content
- **Calendars** – develop a schedule or a plan for posting and publishing on social media

- **Current Events** – use what is happening in your community and the world (People are already talking about it!)
- **Creative Twists** – Example: BustedHalo, InstaLent Challenge
- **Catholics Love to Share** – Borrow and Share (especially from your own followers)
- Video Homilies or Recaps and Post on Facebook or Website
- Allow your homily to reach those **marginalized parishioners or Catholics who are not at Mass**. Whether they are homebound, hospitalized, sick, or haven't been in the pews, posting videos of your message is a great way to ensure you reach all parishioners Find a photographer or videographer in the parish who is willing to share their time and talents by partnering with you regularly.
- Video from inside the church and always remember to be welcoming and hospitable.
- Here is a quick list of items you can easily post online to develop stewardship further digitally:
  - Parish Newsletter
  - Renewal Materials
  - Retreat Information
  - Survey Link (if applicable)
  - Lay Witness Talks (at Renewal time AND other times)
  - Daily scripture
  - Photos from parish events
  - Videos from parish events or homily clips
- Ensure that your online presence reflects the parish calendar. Is Easter weekend approaching? Plan for tweets

and posts to go out weekly and then daily as you lead up to the Triduum. Are there any Bible studies about to kick off? Don't miss the opportunity to make your parishioners - and, by extension, the community - aware. Creating a content calendar will help you keep people in the loop and keep the stewardship message ongoing.

## CROSSOVER CONTENT

- Share printed materials digitally.
- Use the time at Mass to communicate the importance of getting linked digitally.
- Explain WHY using online evangelization is essential. After all, digital communication saves money and puts pertinent parish information right at parishioners' fingertips.
- Ask parish leaders to let all of their ministry members know, as well, and encourage them to LIKE and follow the platforms.
- After all, if you have these online options, but no one knows about them, what's the point? Don't forget to use a #hashtag. This "catchphrase" can be used across all platforms and will increase the likelihood that the parish will move up the list on search engines.

## COMPARISON

- DIGITAL
  - Instant – Live with a click
  - Interactive – Find out more immediately
  - Measurable – You can track it, performance, demographics, etc.



- Flexible – You can change instantly. (Principal change in our book, etc.)
- Cost-Conscious – Pennies on the dollar, costs on the rise
- Coordinated – Diocesan and Parish Coordination with respect to pastor
- PRINT
  - Lasting – impression, stacks of magazines, etc.
  - Sensory – something satisfying about physically turning pages, put on fridge
  - Traditional – If experts came out and said that there was a healthier or better alternative to chocolate, there would still be chocolate lovers!
  - Specific – What is the need at the time? Financial? Promotion of Event?
  - Credible – Anyone can publish digitally now, but not everyone can print something or run a campaign in print
  - REGISTRATION FORMS!

## **STARTING POINT: DATABASE MANAGEMENT**

- Clean it up! (Became obvious during a migration, did a census)
- Collect Emails / Contact Info

## **EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS**

- Weekly and Stewardship
- Events – From Funerals to Festivals
- East of Use – When is it necessary to click?

## **ONLINE MINISTRY GUIDE**

- Can update in real time
- Easily accessible year-round
- Mail then digitize – guests
- Instructions for Connecting

## **FAITH FORMATION**

- Digital Lessons, Supplement in class
- Sacramental Prep – Baptism, etc.

## **ONLINE GIVING & PAYING FEES**

- Increase giving
- Paying off Debt, Campaigns
- Forms for Different Funds, Customize
- Easily Collect, not as much cash/check floating around

## **APPS & QR CODES**

- Parish App
- Whova
- Convenience of QR Codes
  - Surveys
  - Registrations
  - Mass Attendance Tracking
  - This Presentation!

## **DIGITAL STEWARDSHIP**

- It's a way to get more people involved!

- Use the talents that you have in your parish! This is the perfect way for people to get involved in an area of stewardship that might be “out of the box.”
- Adults in the marketing or technology fields that aren't afraid of using and learning technology and social media.
- Teens and Young Adults to create and manage content on sub-pages. (@spxncyouth, @spxncyoungeadult, etc.) ... THINK resume for college or a future job.
- Create a Social Media Ministry if you might need one. This will allow additional opportunities to build a team of digital disciples.
- Intentionally reach out and invite young adults to invest their time and talent in their parish. Consider asking a few young adults to be a part of the Stewardship Committee or Retreat planning. Seek them out to lead a parish ministry!
- They can offer a unique perspective on parish life.

Mistakes – it's ok – people will point them out to you!

Negative Comments – it will happen, but the question is “why are you still watching?”