

COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

In parishes, especially as large as Good Shepherd, technology can serve the people of God well in so many ways. Technology uses the psychology of various media to assist various types of learners. Some people are auditory learners, others are visual learners. Still others are sensate learners. The two large screens in our church particularly help visual learners. We will use these screens for a number of purposes. At weekend liturgies, they will assist us in learning new music for the Mass and participating in singing the refrain of the responsorial psalm, the Gospel Acclamation, as well as listing the hymn numbers at Mass. Screens can be used for Catholic Encore presentations by the priest at Mass and adult formation programs in the church outside of Mass. They are also helpful in presenting the weekly activities in our parish for 15 minutes before Mass as well as 15 minutes after Mass in order to streamline the number of chair announcements by the priest during the Mass. The screens will be used to project a collage of pictures of loved ones at Christian Wake Services as requested by the families of the deceased. Visuals on the screen will also enhance the Christmas Concert of our parish each year in church. Finally, our diocese is currently in the process of developing a telecommunications system from the Catholic Center to provide a simulcast to all of the parishes of our diocese in much the same way that our parish uses simulcast of the Christmas and Easter Masses for the Hall and Classrooms.

A review of the Decree on the Mass Media entitled *Inter Mirifica* from the Documents of the Vatican Council II of the Catholic Church, 4 December 1963, will help us to understand the proper use of the media in our Church and in our world today. In Chapter I, it clearly states: *The Catholic Church was founded by Christ our Lord to bring salvation to everybody and consequently is duty bound to preach the gospel. It believes that its task involves using the media to proclaim the good news of salvation as well as teaching people how to use them properly. The church has an innate right to use and own any of these media which are necessary or useful for the formation of Christians and for all of its pastoral work. It is the duty of pastors of souls to instruct and direct the faithful in their use, so that they will contribute to their own salvation and perfection and that of all of humanity.*

More recently, Pope Benedict XVI asked priests to become more media savvy by preaching to the faithful from the Internet as well as the Pulpit. Note his theme on 16 May 2010 for the World Day for Social Communication: “The priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word.” In this message the pope calls on all the ministries of the Church to use the latest technologies to preach the gospel and to encourage a dialogue with their practitioners. He tells people that church communities have traditionally relied on modern media to open the lines of communication. And as the culture changes, the Church needs to use the latest technologies, especially if it wants to reach younger people. In his address the Pope teaches: *Priests are thus challenged to proclaim the gospel by employing the latest generation of audiovisual resources (images, videos, animated features, blogs, Websites) which, alongside traditional means, can open up broad new vistas for dialogue, evangelization, and catechesis.* Pope Benedict acknowledges that new technologies call on priests to be more savvy in their use, that these technologies can foster deeper types of

relationships even across vast distances, and urged that the ministry not forget its primary obligation and message. Therefore, care must be taken in how the Church uses technology.

Our use of the media in our parish does not in any way vitiate the integrity of the Mass, that is, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We are in liturgical compliance.

The computer is another technological service that we are using to improve communications. Besides the weekly Bulletin, our Website is very useful for the dissemination of information. We have increased its use to include adult faith formation through articles under “Shepherd’s Teachings” as well as online registration for various parish programs. Also, online access to PayPal makes our Website a more interactive tool. We not only receive information, but are also driving information to our parishioners each week. Examples of this include E-Blasts on special occasions from our parish, Facebook used by several Staff Directors as well as a periodic E-newsletter entitled “Good News from Good Shepherd” to all parishioners who have authorized the use of their email address for such purposes. In addition, the staff of our parish is now able to use Calling Post for urgent communications to all of our parishioners when needed. Our parish campus is also equipped with Wi-Fi for use by our parish staff to facilitate access to the internet and credit card use during parish events and programs. Our Communications Team has also developed procedures to assist the lead ministers of our parish in advertizing their events within our parish and beyond to the larger community.

Our parish can be proud of the expanded use of the media to better serve our communication in keeping with the current teachings of our Church and the challenge to our parish family.