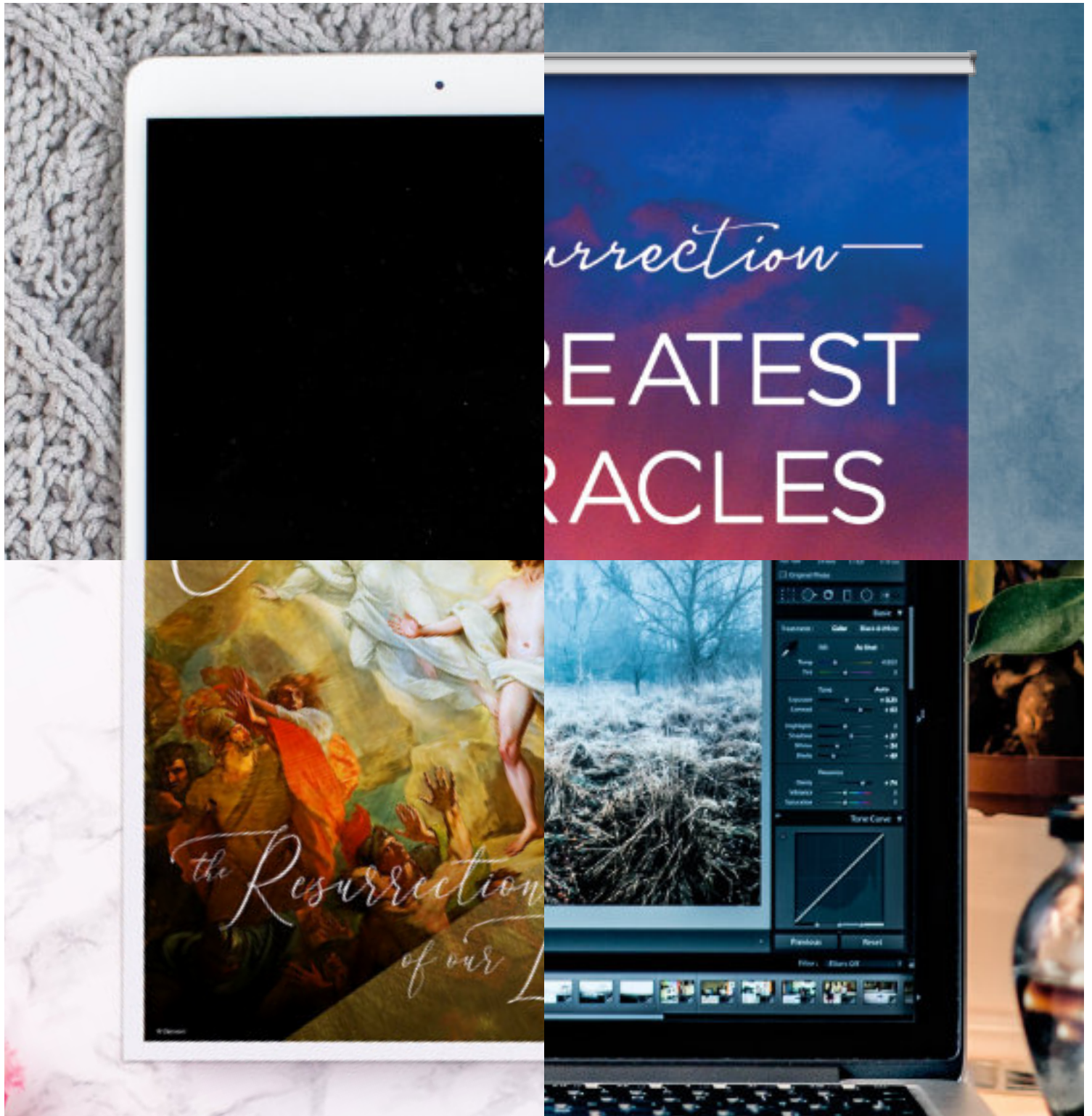


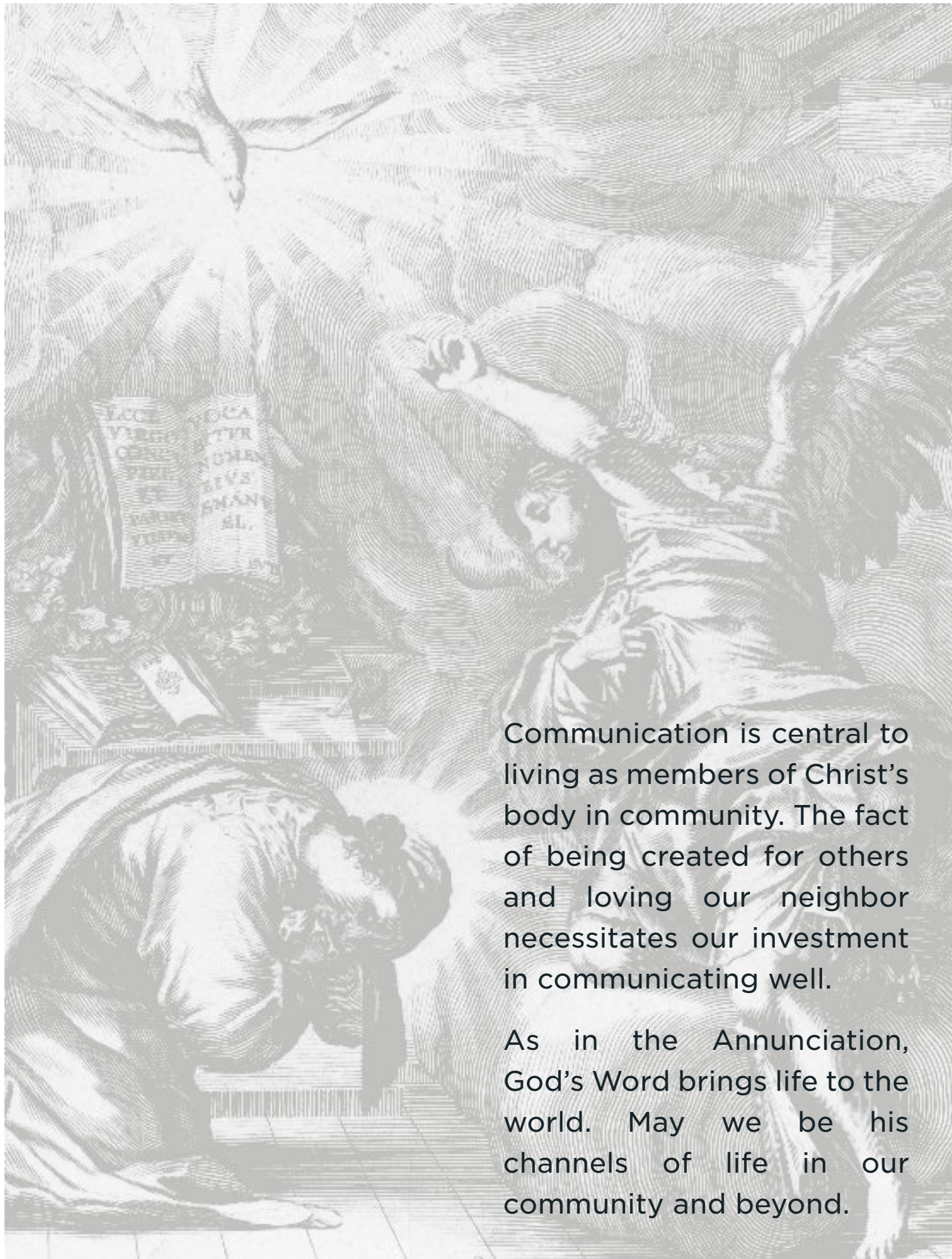


Breaking Boundaries

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Communication is central to living as members of Christ's body in community. The fact of being created for others and loving our neighbor necessitates our investment in communicating well.

As in the Annunciation, God's Word brings life to the world. May we be his channels of life in our community and beyond.



At the heart of what Diocesan is, we want to help you bring people to Christ.

From our beginning, we have chosen to specifically serve the Catholic Church by means of building communication tools to help dioceses and parishes connect people with the life of the Church, spread the Word of God, and build the body of Christ.

We hope this issue of our communications guide helps to do the same.

FEATURED STORIES

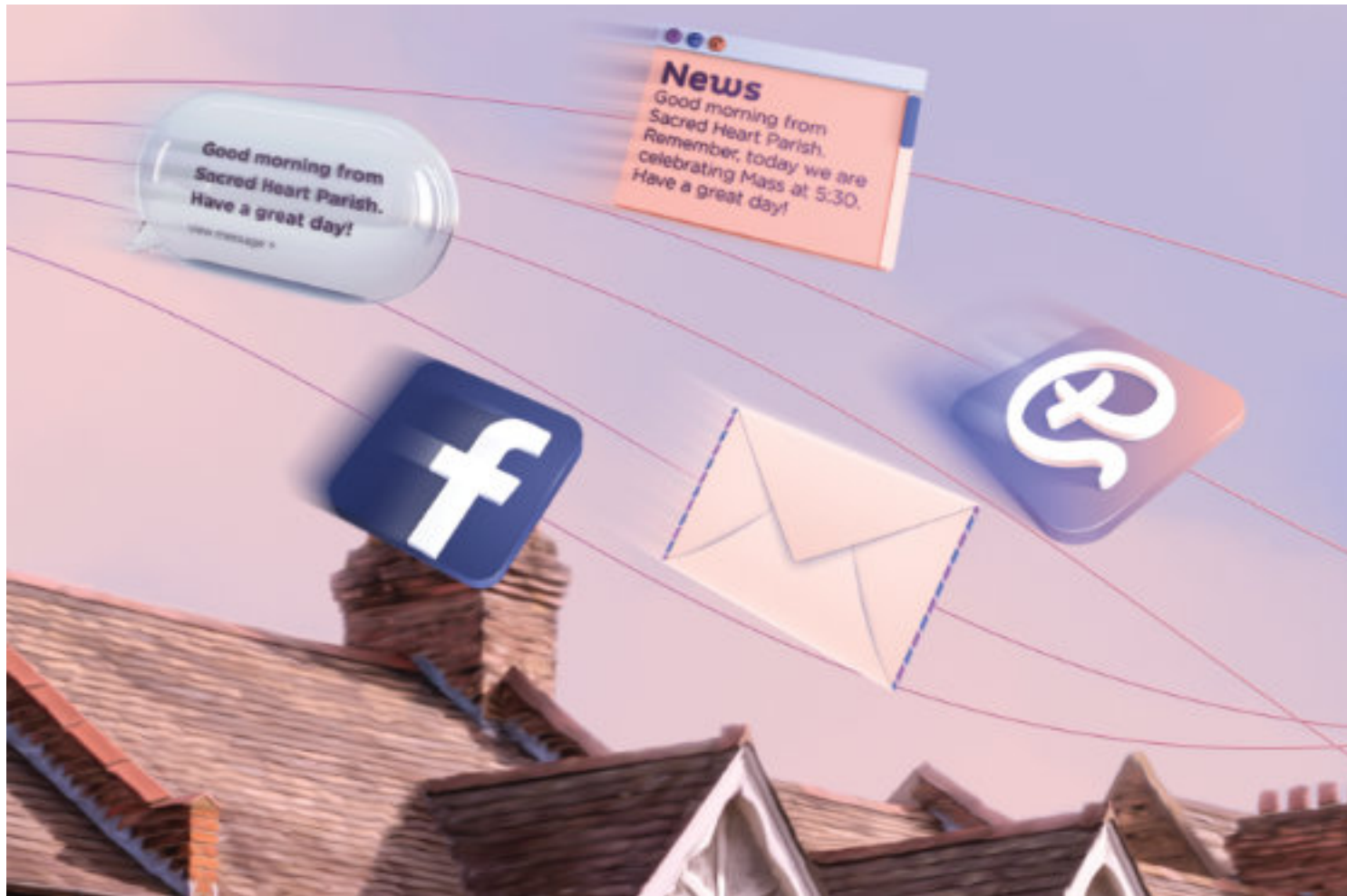
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DIOCESAN



Evangelus

The Easiest Way to Message More People

Posts, likes, replies, comments, chats, notifications, and the list goes on. There is no shortage of ways to interact with people through sites, apps, and other channels. So why is there still a disconnect

with the person in the pew during the week?

About two years ago we surveyed a large number of our parish customers to see

how they felt about their communication with parishioners. We generally heard one of two things. Either the parish utilized only one or two forms of communication (i.e. only Facebook) to keep in touch with people and felt they were doing a good job, or used many forms of communication but felt they struggled to manage everything people using so many different services.

We all know we need to be where people are, but with those people spread across so many options, it has become a struggle to communicate well with a majority of parishioners.

The COVID-19 pandemic made this even more clear. When you can't be in touch with people through physical means, digital provides an opportunity to connect with them throughout the week. This opportunity and struggle also existed pre-pandemic with Easter-only Catholics and reaching those outside the Church. People are out there, but there are so many ways to reach them. How do I manage it all with limited staff?

Our survey was simply confirmation of what we had been hearing since the onset of social media and texting. Knowing we had to address this need for the good of the Church, we set out to build what would become Evangelus, a way to communicate with people on various forms of digital media with one message. So this equates to a manageable amount of work for one member of the parish staff and the benefit of reaching more people across different communication platforms. Type one message and send it to email, text, myParish app, Facebook, Twitter, and your website.

Reality is that every person has their own preferred way of staying in touch with the church. Some are active on Facebook or are texters. Others habitually grab the bulletin every week or rely on email or endless other tools to know what is going on. Finally there is a way to effectively reach a larger percent of your parishioners or visitors without more work.

To learn more about how Evangelus can help your parish communicate better or to get it free until September call our Customer Care team at 1-800-994-9817.



Welcome Back: Post-Quarantine

Facing Communication Reality by Mike DiCosola

As we begin to welcome people back to the parish, what should we be doing now to be better prepared for people to leave us again. Maybe you are a bit puzzled right now: "Huh? What do you mean: 'when people leave us again?!?'"

Let's face it, people leave parish life all the time. For many this happens every summer with vacations and the busyness of life. For some this happens in the spaces between Christmas, Ash Wednesday, and Easter. Some people were practicing social distancing long before we ever heard the term COVID-19. Many will feel drawn back to church for the first time in a long time because of the ordeal we have recently suffered.

What can you be doing right now so that when your parishioners are physically distant, you can still reach out to gather them in, show them that they are loved,

give them a place to belong, minister to their needs and continue to call them to participate in the Divine Life, wherever they may be listening? Another way to frame this question is to simply consider what you want to do now if all this were to happen again.

Most parishes will admit that they cannot easily reach all the people they need to in a moment's notice. This is a function of two things: not having the right contact information and not communicating where people are paying attention. When you combine these two factors you come to understand your potential reach. When you think about it everything you do depends on your reach. If you can not communicate it, you can not get people to engage. When considering what you need to do to welcome people back, I recommend working diligently on these two things to increase your reach. I've



listed some suggestions below for you to consider implementing now so you are ready when people finally come back.

1. Ask people for permission to send them communication. Now more than ever people see that they need to opt-in to your communication tools to stay in the know. Capitalize on this opportunity. Ask them to sign-up for *Evangelus*, complete their profile and join groups. Ask them to download *myParish App*. Ask them to follow your Facebook page or other social media channels.

2. Emphasize the importance of staying connected with the parish. Make this a front-and-center action for these first weeks as people return. If your Pastor stresses how important this is, people will respond. At my parish our pastor always wants 100% participation in the Bishop's annual appeal and he mentions it EVERY WEEK until he gets the response he wants. If you commit to some level of participation: we want 100% signed up! The results will amaze you. Be Not Afraid!

3. While I encourage a big push right

as people are returning, inviting people to connect with you is not a one time ask. It is critical to continually ask people to engage with you. This means week after week and on all of your platforms. If you are streaming events - remind people to opt-in after every event. If you post to social - ask people to follow, like and share. You should remind newcomers and visitors to join your platforms at every Mass.

4. Lastly once you have people opted in to your systems, you need to communicate consistently across all of your channels. We built *Evangelus* to specifically make this easy for parishes with the least amount of time and the most affordable price.

As we gradually return to fuller parish life make it a priority to fill the communications gaps in your parish, so whatever the future holds, your community will be stronger in facing it.

To see how Evangelus or myParish App can help round out your parish communications, please contact our Customer Care team at 1-800-994-9817.



Breaking Boundaries

Connecting Platforms and Parishioners



A BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

Utilizing a spectrum of digital and print communication channels together enables you to reach more people, faster, and more effectively than any channel individually.

It is important to consider whether you tend to use only the form(s) of communication that are familiar to you or those preferred across your parish membership and by visitors.

Since every person has their own communication preferences, a diverse and well balanced strategy is essential to reaching the largest number of people and addressing new or unexpected needs that arise across the community.

In the following pages, we will identify the tools at your disposal and offer some strategies to coordinate these tools for different types of communications at your parish.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVANGELUS | MYPARISH APP | DISCOVERMASS | WEBSITE | SOCIAL | BULLETIN

Information that is shared on a regular basis or is not of great urgency. May include meeting or gathering times and practical details about parish life.

- ▶ **Be concise**
If information sent on the App, Social or Text will be longer than one paragraph, keep it short and link to the full text on an email, your website, or in a bulletin.

▶ **Promote email bulletin subscription**
Send messages telling people how to view or subscribe to this week’s bulletin on DiscoverMass.com.
- ▶ **Invite people to Mass**
Non-parishioners may also be reading your messages.

▶ **Habit of Communication**
You should communicate with your parishioners at least twice each week.

▶ **Consider the timing of your messages**
Send at lunch or before 4pm.

URGENT MESSAGES

EVANGELUS | MYPARISH APP | SOCIAL

Important messages that need quick exposure. May include last minute schedule changes or urgent prayer requests.

- ▶ **Still consider timing**
Will a lot of people see it soon? Will it be overshadowed by other current events?

▶ **Communicate importance**
Use ALL CAPS in the TITLE to emphasize importance.

▶ **Spell check**
It is easy to overlook things in a rush. A browser plugin like Grammarly may help.
- ▶ **Articulate**
Be clear and specific to reduce confusion.

▶ **Be prompt and strategic**
Send as soon as possible, but consider where people may hear the info first. Information may spread fast.

▶ **Value consistency**
Keep messages consistent across channels by composing once and sending in multiple ways with a tool like *Evangelus*.

EVENT PROMOTION

EVANGELUS | MYPARISH APP | DISCOVERMASS | WEBSITE | SOCIAL | BULLETIN | BANNER | POSTER | A-FRAME

Disseminating information about an upcoming special occasion. May be for one-time, annual, or a series of upcoming events including presentations, fundraisers, or celebrations.

- ▶ **Repetition works**
Repeated exposure and invitation across both digital and print channels is key.

▶ **Request RSVP even free**
Will give you an idea of level of interest.

▶ **Make RSVP easy**
Have a signup list on way out of church, text everyone a link to an online form.
- ▶ **Emphasize importance**
Large indoor and outdoor signage shows the importance of the event. If it is only in the bulletin, it may be perceived equal in importance to other things in the bulletin.

▶ **Get creative**
Think of some fun ways for people to be engaged around the event before it takes place.

SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION

EVANGELUS | MYPARISH APP | DISCOVERMASS | WEBSITE | BULLETIN

Messages meant to build-up or strengthen people in their faith. Varying in length, these types of communications may include quotes and bits of wisdom or reflections and instructional articles.

- ▶ **Sometimes forgotten**
Easily overlooked in favor of event information, but still important.

▶ **Start a series**
Develop a theme or follow the theme of the Sunday homily.

▶ **Mix it up**
Send a variety of short and longer inspirational messages.
- ▶ **Lives of Saints**
If sending inspiration from saints, consider adding historical background to use it as a teaching moment.

▶ **Provide additional resources**
Point people to faith-building content in the app or other articles on the web.

▶ **Revisit Sunday’s homily**
Send a brief app message or mid-week text reminder.

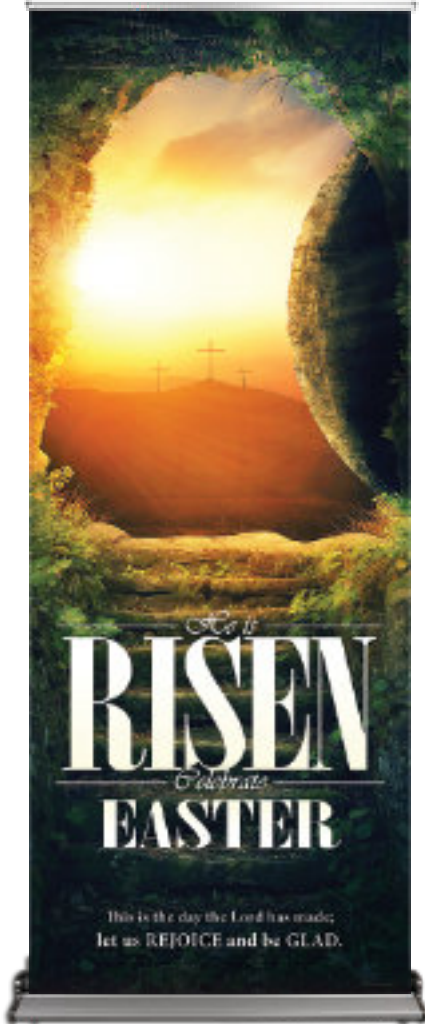
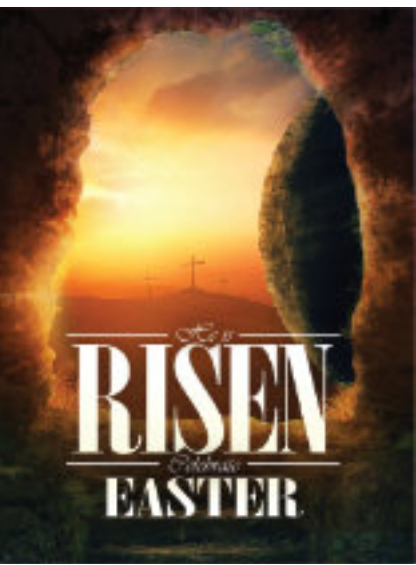
LITURGICAL CELEBRATION

EVANGELUS | MYPARISH APP | DISCOVERMASS | WEBSITE | BULLETIN | BANNER | PRAYER CARD

Reminders of or participation in a liturgical season. May include invitation to the sacraments or encouragement to recognize a unique season in the church.

- ▶ **Easy ambiance**
Use large signage like banners and A-frame signs to create ambiance and inspire people.
- ▶ **Create a visual theme**
Use consistent colors, fonts, images, and language across all communications.
- ▶ **Create a message theme**
Plan out a series of communications with an inspirational message that ties together around the theme.
- ▶ **Find a balance**
Make sure to use both small and large format print as well as digital channels.

- ▶ **Central prayer**
Consider a special prayer for the parish to focus around during the season. Make it available as a prayer card, in the app, on the website, and in the bulletin.



SOLUMN COMMEMORATION

EVANGELUS | DISCOVERMASS | WEBSITE | BULLETIN | BANNER | PRAYER CARD

Communications involving the deceased. May include Memorial Day, funerals, or anything remembering those that have passed away.

- ▶ **Be aware of your tone**
Well crafted language remembering those that have passed can make a difference to people.
- ▶ **A small but thoughtful gift**
Consider giving a special prayer card as a physical gesture on occasions when remembering those that have died.
- ▶ **Multichannel routine**
Establish a habit of sending out communication across multiple channels when notifying the parish of those that have passed. With Evangelus you can build a reusable template and send as email, text, myParish App notification, and social media posts.
- ▶ **A memorial**
A beautifully printed banner of the names of the deceased can give the sense of value and importance associated with a physical memorial while still being temporary.
- ▶ **Make it personal**
Reusing similar language for each deceased is okay, but try to include something unique for a personal feel.

HELP WITH YOUR STRATEGY

With so many communication channels in our digital age and variations in how individuals communicate, it can be hard to find a manageable balance in your communications. In any case, it is important to remember that the best strategies include a combination of both print and digital. To help determine the best strategies for your parish, please connect with our Customer Care team at Diocesan. We have a long history of

innovation and a deep understanding of the needs of parishes and parishioners alike. We are here to help you optimize your communication with your parishioners so you can help them connect to Christ.

The following two pages present an overview of the various tools we have addressed in the above strategies.

DIGITAL TOOLS

EVANGELUS

Email, texting, social media, myParish app, and web posting.

MYPARISH APP

Push notifications and faith-building resources

DISCOVERMASS

Mass times and digital bulletin

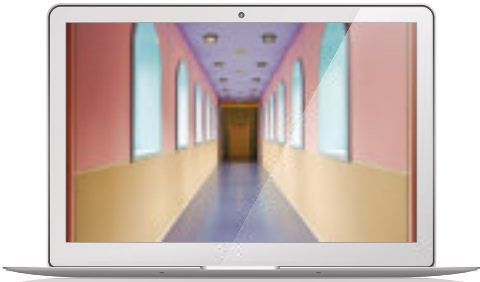
WEBSITE

Reference for parish information and resources

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok

Laptop & Evangelus



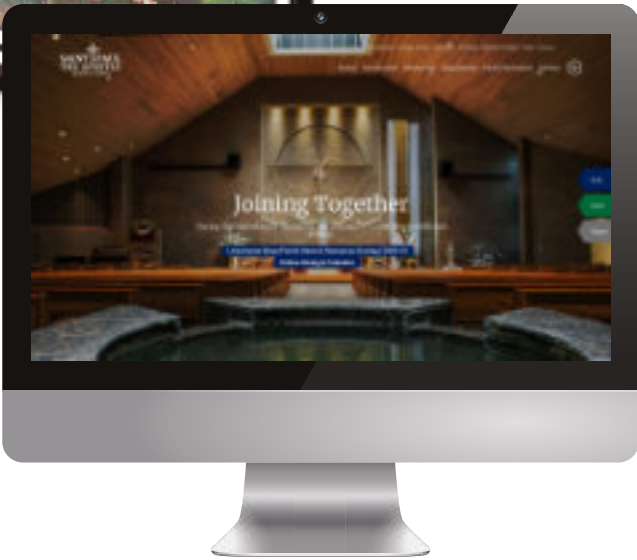
Phone & myParish App



Tablet & DiscoverMass



Desktop & Website



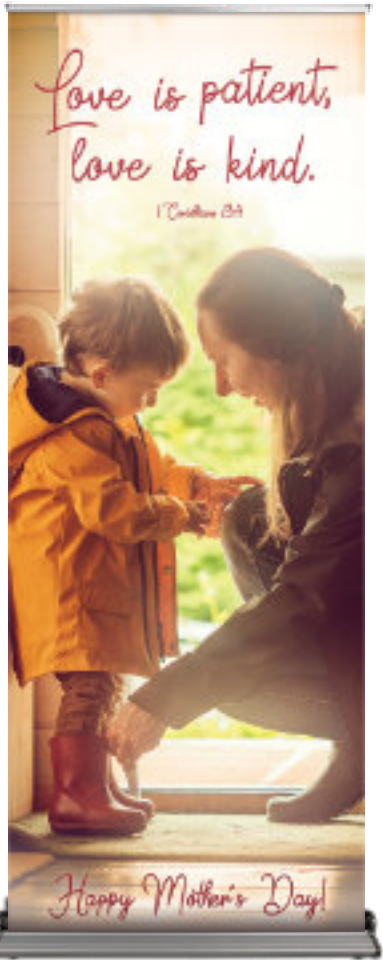
Social Media



Bulletin



Banner & Stand



Poster



Prayer Card (& Bookmark)



A-Frame stand & Graphic



More products available at diocesan.com

PRINT TOOLS

BULLETIN

Weekly publication with selection of beautiful custom covers

BANNER

Beautiful designs for many liturgical or seasonal celebrations, custom option available

POSTER

Beautiful designs for special events or celebrations, custom option available

A-FRAME

Outdoor heavy duty plastic-framed free-standing graphic for special event information

PRAYER CARD

Beautiful imagery and prayers for saints, memorial, or special events.

Build a Better Bulletin

Strategies of a Designer by Marcus Baron



One of the services we offer at Diocesan is redesigning your bulletin for you. Often your bulletin has not changed for so long that you don't remember why it is structured and designed the way it is. The following are some suggestions from Marcus Baron, one of our designers that

Before we start creating a bulletin, we first get a pulse on your parish community. We want to understand who you are and what your mission is as Catholics in your unique locale. Then we get building. Like you, we want to see faith in Jesus Christ flourish. The best contribution we can make is to assist you in communicating how beautiful, attractive, and relevant our shared faith is.

Following we share a few ways we structure bulletins for readability and impact.

Typographical Hierarchies

Everybody seems to have an opinion on

typography. Most people don't realize every typeface plays a different role. Some typefaces are designed to be displayed



large. Other typefaces are designed for textbook body copy. The wrong font in the wrong place is often a culprit in poor design. Establishing a typography system and consistently adhering to specific font sizes and styles for titles, subheads, and body text can create a more pleasant reading experience for the parishioner.

Colors and the Lack Thereof

We all respond to color. The right color combination can make a document pop. If your bulletin is feeling stagnant, bring it to life with a fresh color combination that works for you.

COLOR COMBINATION

When 4-color bulletins were becoming popularized, parishes began putting color on every square inch of the document. While color can help grab the reader's attention, it may also have the opposite effect. The reader may experience fatigue and skip around, not digesting information well. It is important to find the right balance between color and white space.

Grids

Working within a grid system can do wonders for any document. It's counter-intuitive, but limiting yourself to a grid system is ultimately very freeing and gives you a professional outcome. Professional

Grid Systems are For more pleasant bet for reading. bul

graphic designers value the importance that grid systems play in their work. Grids help create flow and consistency from the top of the page to the bottom; from start to finish.

A Consistent Formula

This is something you can start doing right now! Help your parishioners out by creating a visual expectation for events in your bulletin. For example, list the name of the event, then the date and time, then location, and then the description and any other pertinent information. We often see are some events with crucial

information buried in the description, then some with the date and time in the title, and so on. You may see this simple change help parishioner engagement.

Find out other ways Diocesan is helping parishes improve their bulletin and how we can help you. For further guidance or a custom design review, please give us a call at 1-800-994-9817. We would love to help you make the most of your bulletin.

- Bible Study**
May 4, 2020, 9 am
St. John's Center, Room C
Exploring the book of Job
- Choir Practice**
May 6, 2020, 6 pm
St. John Parish, Choir Room
Meet Every Wednesday
- Parish Festival**
June 5, 2020, 2-10 pm
Jamison Park, Main Pavillion
16th Annual St. John Festival



Crossing Channels

The Evolution of a Staple

by Curtis Street

Most of us have probably at some point struggled with hanging on to the past. We can sometimes remember people as they were “back in the day” without recognizing that they have probably changed, as we all do in some way. Even as parents, there can be a tendency to hold a growing child beside an ideal of some time we remember fondly in the past.

Sometimes it takes big occasions or difficult circumstances to help us recognize the present value of somethings. This could not be truer for a form of communication that we are all familiar with, the bulletin.

The church bulletin has withstood the test of time as a reliable source of all things happening in the life of our parish communities. Then with the advent of parish apps, some people questioned whether the new technology would eliminate the need for the bulletin. Yet in recent years, despite the evolution of mobile technology, we have found the bulletin to be a staple that parishioners keep coming back to.

Once COVID-19 hit us, and parishes started closing their doors, parishioners were still looking for access to their weekly bulletin to keep updated.

An undervalued superpower of the bulletin that it had been growing without great notice was now ready to be revealed.

While the bulletin had always been recognized as a tangible bundle of pages to grab after Mass, it now became apparent that it was equally, if not more, capable of serving its communication purpose being delivered through digital means.

Once your bulletin has a home on the internet, it is capable reaching directly to people through any platform available, wherever your parishioners may be.

Whether it is through a post, a tweet, a notification, an email, or anywhere a link can be clicked, it has become very apparent that the bulletin is here to see us through thick and thin.

Your parishioners can sign up at discovermass.com/subscribe to have the bulletin automatically sent every week.



Large Format

Making a Big Impression

Bigger means more important with most communications. In the bulletin, you give more space to information that is more important. Whether you put it on the front cover, give it a dedicated page, or add a special insert, the point is that you want to get people's attention.

Locating large format print pieces in high traffic areas can help maximize exposure. The largest number of people visiting your location will see your message and recognize its importance if thoughtfully positioned. Whether it is 6 ½ foot pop-up banners in the entryways, large posters in gathering spots, or outdoor A-frame

Uses for Large Format signage:

- Welcome greeting
- Display Mass times
- Parish festival
- Fish fries
- All Souls commemoration
- Liturgical season theme
- And more!

signs outside entrances, make sure your signage is positioned for high visibility.

Another key to communicating or marketing well is repetition. You want people to see or hear a message multiple times so it can sink in. When compounded with large visuals, not only do visitors get repeat exposure, but also relate the large presence with the high priority of the information. So, when the pastor makes an announcement after Mass, someone sees a new Facebook post, or a visitor goes to your website for Mass times before visiting the parish, these things will simply recall the large sign that was seen on their way to Mass.

To discuss how large format signage may help your parish, call us at 1-800-994-9817.



Prayer Cards

Commonly utilized as items for prayer or devotion, prayer cards have also long found value in commemoration of historical events of significance or the lives of loved ones that have passed.

Throughout the recent pandemic and isolation, many throughout the Church grieved not only the inability to receive our Lord in the Eucharist, but the lack of communal gathering. As we gradually come back together and experience restoration as the physical Body of Christ bound by real relationships, we can give thanks and tangibly mark the occasion in many ways. Some things to consider may include special bulletin covers, banners, Facebook cover images, emails, and prayer cards. Of all of these items, prayer cards will hold the greatest longevity.

People tend to hold on to prayer cards to remember past events or prayers of significance.

Among our services, we offer parishes and dioceses custom design to create something unique for your community. Our Customer Care team and designers can help you make something truly special. Give us a call at 1-800-994-9817.



Bookmarks

Everyone has a book, and as Catholics we encourage intellectual and spiritual growth on our journey to be conformed to the image of Christ. Yet, regardless of whether people are avid readers or not, bookmarks always seem to find a home in a bible, magazine, or novel and are never without value. What a great reminder, to open a book and find a valuable prayer or encouraging reminder before diving in. Additionally, bookmarks maintain the special versatility of being able to contain the

content of a prayer card while serving the practical need of a reader.

Equal to our prayer cards, we are happy offer custom design for bookmarks so that you can have something truly special to share with your parishioners and show your appreciation in their return to the community after the pandemic shut-down.

To discuss ideas for your special design, please contact our Customer Care team at 1-800-994-9817.

DIOCESAN

1050 74th Street SW
Byron Center, MI 49315



Unexpected needs or situations may arise that you are unsure how to address in your parish communications. We are always happy to share our knowledge gleaned from 60 plus years of work with parishes and dioceses across the country.

Thank you for the opportunity and pleasure to help you further the Kingdom of our Lord on Earth.