

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



DIOCESE OF JACKSON

FINAL DRAFT PROPOSAL

JANUARY 2016

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Catholic Communication Consultation Initiative

Development of the *Diocese of Jackson Communications Plan* in collaboration with the CPA-Catholic Academy-USCCB Consultation Initiative with partial funding from the Catholic Communications Campaign.

I. MISSION AND VISION

Diocesan Mission

We propose to live in such a way that we proclaim the Kingdom of God, the Good News of Jesus Christ, by our own ongoing conversion and by the witness of an authentically Christian life lived according to the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church.

We, the Church of the Diocese of Jackson, believe:

- That Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, and the Sign of God's compassionate love, gives full meaning to our lives.
- That faith calls us to live the life of Christ nourished by word and sacrament, liturgy and prayer.
- That the vision of Jesus Christ for us is contained in his message that the kingdom of God means "justice, peace and joy that is given by the Holy Spirit."
- That through fidelity to and sharing of the gospel teachings of Jesus and his Church, the grace of the Holy Spirit flows through all of us and we experience being Church.
- That the gift of faith and love we receive demands that we be signs of God's love for us and instruments of God's love for others as we live our family life, parish life and civic life.
- That our choices and decisions as individuals and as a community of disciples must foster justice, peace and joy for all.

As a pilgrim people committed to becoming an evangelizing people, we pledge ourselves to the development and stewardship of our spiritual, human, physical and financial resources.

Mission for Church Communications

Communication is at the heart of the Catholic mission. From Christ's command to His disciples to go forth and preach to all nations, the Catholic witness has been one of both words and deeds. The means of communications have changed over centuries, and the Church has always embraced these means to proclaim the Good News.

Pope Francis in his message for the 48th World Communications Day in 2014 says:

How, then, can communications be at the service of an authentic culture of encounter? What does it mean for us, as disciples of the Lord, to encounter others in the light of the Gospel? In spite of our own limitations and sinfulness, how do we draw truly close to one another? These questions are summed up in what a scribe – a communicator – once asked Jesus: "And who is my neighbor?" (Lk 10:29). This question can help us to see communication in terms of "neighborliness." We might paraphrase the question in this way: How can we be "neighborly" in our use of communications media and in the new environment created by digital technology? I find an answer in the parable of the Good Samaritan, which is also a parable about communication. Those who communicate, in effect, become neighbors ... Communication is really about realizing that we are all human beings, children of God. I like seeing this power of communication as "neighborliness."

Pope Francis in his message for the 49th World Communications Day in 2015 says:

The great challenge facing us today is to learn once again how to talk to one another, not simply how to generate and consume information. The latter is a tendency which our important and influential modern communications media can encourage. Information is important, but it is not enough. All too often things get simplified, different positions and viewpoints are pitted against one another, and people are invited to take sides, rather than to see things as a whole. The family, in conclusion, is not a subject of debate or a terrain for ideological skirmishes. Rather, it is an environment in which we learn to communicate in an experience of closeness, a setting where communication takes place, a “communicating community.”

The media can help communication when they enable people to share their stories, to stay in contact with distant friends, to thank others or to seek their forgiveness, and to open the door to new encounters. By growing daily in our awareness of the vital importance of encountering others, these “new possibilities,” we will employ technology wisely, rather than letting ourselves be dominated by it.

Diocesan Communications Mission

Communicate Jesus Christ, his life and mission by encountering others in joy!

Diocesan Communications Vision

In Jesus Christ, through the gift of salvation given at baptism, we are called to share the Gospel with all we encounter. Therefore, communication furthers a mission for the Diocese of Jackson that proclaims with joy:

1. That our messages communicate the vision of Jesus Christ of justice, peace and joy that is given by the Holy Spirit.
2. That through fidelity to and effectively communicating and sharing the Gospel of Jesus and his Church, the grace of the Holy Spirit flows through us and our experience being Church.
3. That the gift of faith and love we receive demands that our communications be signs of God's love for us and instruments of God's love for others as we live our family life, parish life and civic life.
4. That all communications, as opportunities for evangelization, use appropriate platforms and tools in a proactive, collaborative and engaging manner.

“The Church would feel guilty before the Lord if she did not utilize these powerful means that human skill is daily rendering more perfect. It is through them that she proclaims ‘from the housetops’ the message of which she is the depositary” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 45).

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Guiding Principles are essential elements in a diocesan implementation roadmap for effective communications. Guiding Principles permeate the way the Diocese approaches communications effort.

- 1. We affirm communications is a tool of evangelization; connecting people with Jesus Christ.**
 - a. In our communications we share the joy of the Gospel and inspire faithful action.
 - b. Catholic tradition and teaching permeates our work.
 - c. Our words are words of hope; our actions strive to model Christ and His disciples.
- 2. We embrace opportunities and challenges.**
 - a. We transform significant challenges, questions and issues into opportunities. Our communication is not superficial or defensive and we speak the truth in love. We acknowledge today's issues and trends are important for our work, and we see these as opportunities to witness our faith to the world.
 - b. We embrace and promote innovative communication tools and measure effectiveness to engage and meet the needs and preferences of the diverse faith communities.
- 3. We create moments of encounter.**
 - a. We encounter people by listening and seeking common ground.
 - b. We seek to understand the person and his or her diverse needs or hunger through dialogue and by responding with the Church's liberating message.
 - c. We are transparent and work together in collaborative ways with those we serve and other ministerial leaders. We break down, not reinforce, silos.
- 4. We model good stewardship.**
 - a. We are good stewards of human and financial resources as gifts from God and use these in effective and efficient ways.
 - b. We embrace a culture of accountability and ongoing assessment so that our communication is truthful, timely and transparent.
 - c. We create and deliver content and messages that are measurable, credible, timely, coordinated and consistent.
 - d. We affirm that effective communications requires coordination, transparency, metrics and integrity in the work of the diocese and its parishes, schools and agencies.

*“Good communications helps us to grow closer, to know one another better and ultimately to grow in unity....a culture of encounter demands that we be ready not only to give but to receive”
Pope Francis, World Communications Day Message, 2014*

III. Functions for a Diocesan Communications Office

Communication functions identify the specific work to be undertaken on a regular basis. These are key long-term elements upon which the work of communications can be measured and assessed in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. The Catholic Diocese of Jackson achieves its mission, vision and goals for Catholic Communications by way of three core functions:

1. Provide Leadership and Communication Planning and Coordination:

Create and implement a Communications strategy and plan for the Diocese.

- a. Provide leadership internally and externally to identify, promote and implement a Catholic communications strategy.
- b. Facilitate the professional development, evaluation and training of diocesan staff, parish and school leaders in effective communications including message development, use of current communication tools and technology.
- c. Engage and assess present strategies by seeking regular feedback and assessment to evaluate ongoing and future efforts.

2. Provide Messages and Content

Create inspiring, credible, and clear information about the Church and its positions supporting Catholic teachings, identity and affiliation with the Church.

- a. Develop and coordinate a consistent branding strategy for all messages, stories and images.
- b. Develop communication vehicles and resources, including innovative digital, video and social media.
- c. Ensure our messages and content are clear, accurate, timely and relevant.
- d. Seek feedback and regular assessment of the effectiveness of messages and content with intended audiences and stakeholders.

3. Create Relationships to Engage, Network and Share Information

Develop strong collaborative relationships with key stakeholders throughout the diocese, including parishes and schools to support the communications mission of the Church.

- a. Engage, coordinate and share information with diocesan offices, parishes, schools and institutions.
- b. Support and strengthen the various networks, social systems and communication structures related to the mission of the Church within the diocese.
- c. Develop a strong and pro-active public relations outreach and engage the news media (religious, secular, mainstream, social media).

COMMUNICATION MEDIA & TOOLS

The work of communications is accomplished through an integrated and comprehensive use of:

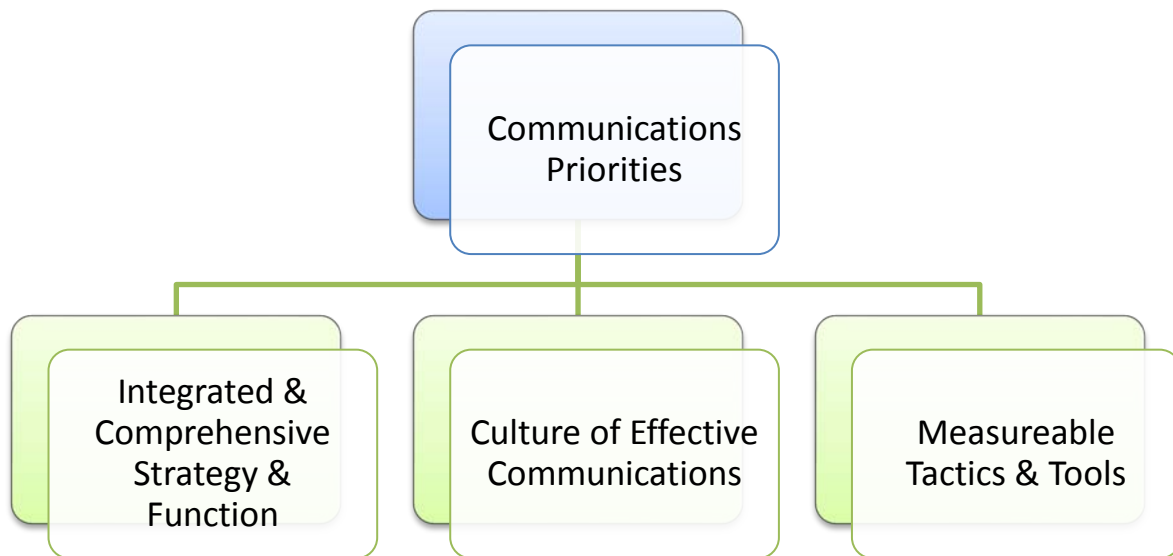
- Personal relationships and personal encounters
- Print, video and audio
- Digital communication tools
- Social media strategies

III. STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Strategic communication goals address the question “*What is most important to do now*” and these assist the Church in Jackson in achieving its pastoral priorities. An effective communication strategy serves the overall mission of the Church. These three goals should move us toward our ultimate goal of effective discipleship: proclaiming Jesus Christ, sharing the gospel and being witnesses of our faith in the Catholic Diocese of Jackson.

Strategic Goals

- 1. Develop a comprehensive communications strategy and function to share the Good News.**
- 2. Create a “culture of effective communication” rooted in dialogue and engagement to support evangelization and faith formation**
- 3. Develop an environment and strategy that values measurable communication tactics and media tools to assist the diocese strengthen evangelization and discipleship.**



Strategic Goals and Objectives

1. Develop a comprehensive communications strategy and function to share the Good News.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Identify and implement best practices for effective communications for the diocese, its parishes, schools, and Catholic organizations.
- 1.2 Identify and develop an effective and sustainable diocesan communications function, structure and funding.
- 1.3 Develop and continually assess and evolve communication content, strategies and tools that inspire, enhance, support and deepen the Church's evangelization and missionary efforts.
- 1.4 Identify and align a consistent communications identity (branding) across diocesan offices and through the use of communications tools/vehicles.

2. Create a “culture of effective communication” rooted in dialogue and engagement to support evangelization, faith formation and stewardship

Objectives:

- 2.1 Define the Culture: Identify and implement communication strategies and tactics based on contemporary communication best practices and rooted in engagement, dialogue, influence and participation.
- 2.2 Promote the Culture: Create awareness among pastoral leaders and develop a strategy to empower, engage and support these ministers as communicators and influencers.
- 2.3 Provide training, support and resources to pastoral leaders on the diocesan, parish and school levels to be effective communicators.

3. Develop an environment and strategy that values measurable communication tactics and media tools to assist the diocese to strengthen evangelization, discipleship and stewardship.

Objectives

3.1 Define and implement a culture that values metrics and the ongoing assessment.

3.2 Develop a timely and ongoing communication assessment process that assesses effectiveness and efficiency based on measurable metrics.

3.3 Provide training and orientation to support regular and ongoing assessment of communication initiatives.