

## Catholic Solutions

# ENABLING PARISH MINISTRY



“ Parishes are the place where God’s people meet Jesus in word and sacrament and come in touch with the source of the Church’s life.

USCCB Communities of Salt and Light, p. 1

# Enabling Parish Ministry

As parish leaders, you are all challenged with the awesome and sometimes overwhelming responsibilities of parish ministry. The urgent temporal needs of managing parish facilities, organizing and implementing catechetical programs, and scheduling resources for Mass often preoccupy our focus and attention. These are all important ministries and deserve our attention, but they are a means to our mission. The ministries are all parts of your ultimate purpose as parishes - to make disciples! Forming disciples and fostering a culture of missionary discipleship must be the priority.

You also recognize that to truly live our missionary purpose, you must become parishes sparked with the fire of the Holy Spirit, creating opportunities for people to have an encounter with Christ so they want to spread the news of the gospel. More than ever, you see the need to interact more personally, more intentionally with each other in order to build trusted relationships.

You want to be mission-focused: forming, serving, and equipping people to be missionary disciples. This means you must harness technology so that you can be more relational. Use data and systems to provide a complete view of parishioners in one place so the system can help to inform your personal interactions.



## Ministry Solutions

Across the United States, mission-focused parishes are prioritizing three areas of ministry in addition to the daily and weekly parish activities, programs and liturgies:

- 1. Welcome and New Parishioner Engagement**
- 2. Personal and Group Prayer**
- 3. Parishioner Accompaniment and Care**

These three areas represent a shift to greater awareness and interaction with parishioners, which add more for parish leaders to do. With the same number or fewer people to carry out the operations and mission of the parish, your software systems must help you do more than track contact and contribution information. The systems need to help enable your ministry and help you know where to focus your personal interactions. This can be done with an intentional combination of personal and systems processes.

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# 1. Welcome and New Parishioner Engagement

Welcome visitors, thank them for attending liturgy, and invite them back! Maintain contact so you know they came back. And offer ways for them to be more involved in the parish (*and get them involved as soon as possible*). Sounds simple but this is often lacking at parishes.

This ministry requires that you prioritize ways to get visitors to provide you with their contact information without asking them to stand up at Mass! Set up a welcome desk and/or a text number with an offer for a thank-you gift (*such as a prayer card or a book*) and ask for their email address and name in order to receive it.



With this information, the extensive email and text capability of **MinistryPlatform** provides you with a way to set up a series of welcome communications and invitations. Extend it further by having MinistryPlatform initiate a process in **Growth Method** for more scheduled personal interaction and opportunities to participate in the parish. Keep parishioners informed and engaged through the app **PocketPlatform**. Invite them to groups and provide prayerful content such as daily devotions. This can all be integrated with and managed through MinistryPlatform.

# 2. Personal and Group Prayer

Encourage everyone to pray! By providing daily or weekly prayer content or links to prayers, along with the option to sign up for prayer and discussion groups, parish leaders can establish a culture of praying always and everywhere.

Use MinistryPlatform communications to send a scheduled weekly or monthly email inviting people to participate in prayer. Include a link to a prayer guide and a link to sign up for the Prayer Group. Use the GroupLife app to manage the small group and Facilities to schedule and set up rooms for the group meetings. Utilize the Prayer & Feedback widget to allow parishioners to submit a prayer request, praise report, comment, and more on your website and in your PocketPlatform mobile app.



Going to World Youth Day or conducting a mission trip or pilgrimage? Use **Go Method** to help manage planning, scheduling, and tracking the process. Manage your parishioner information all through MinistryPlatform.

# 3. Parishioner Accompaniment and Care

Stay in touch with parishioners. Know when to celebrate an anniversary or when to follow up on a sacrament. Know when something has changed in a parishioner's habits that might indicate a need for prayer or care, and receive alerts to reach out in person.

With MinistryPlatform as your central system providing a complete view of parishioners, you can send personalized communications scheduled by the system. Set up future emails and visits to the family of a newly baptized child, newlywed couples, or a grieving spouse. Note changes in regular activity such as giving and set an automated action to offer prayer based on the change. And where there personal care at the home or for hospital visits, use the *Care Case* feature to securely note activity and status for your pastor and key ministry leaders.

# Additional Resources for Your Parish Ministry



A facilitated service combining an anonymous parishioner survey with consultation for parish leadership. Parishioners are asked to reflect on their faith and if the parish is helping them in their journey, to provide parish leaders information to help focus ministry and identify opportunities to change or add ministries.



Ready-to-deploy templated websites for your parish, including SEO optimization.



Managed IT services for your parish for network management, firewall, backup and recovery, and wireless systems, and data security. Expert consultation on Voice Over IP phone systems and wireless networks.



Leveraging over 40 years of experience working with parishes and dioceses, ACS Technologies offers training and services for our solutions, as well as ministry consulting, to reach your specific goals. MinistrySmart also offers an online community and conferences.

## ABOUT ACS TECHNOLOGIES®

Our mission is to enable every Catholic diocese and parish with personalized ministry resources that help you see, serve, and know your community more.

We can equip you to engage more meaningfully with people in their faith journey today while planning for the future through data-informed, mission-driven ministry. Together, we can change lives forever.