

# SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUR PARISH





# SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUR PARISH

Social media got your stressed? No worries! Take a deep dive into the complicated world of digital communication and discover how these popular platforms help parishes reach Catholics far and wide to spread the message of Jesus Christ.

## INSTAGRAM

Popular with bloggers, influencers, and riddled with hashtags from #God, #ProLifeGeneration, and #Faith to #Wanderlust and #CampLife, today Instagram is not just for scrolling through designer photos. Well-known Catholic Church figures such as Fr. Mike Schmitz and Bishop Robert Barron are easily found on people's personal streams and, with a little bit of intentionality, your church's content can be just as sought-after.

Here are some easy and engaging ways to make Instagram work for your parish.

### First, Some Stats

- Created in 2010, Instagram is a popular photo-sharing app that lets you connect with brands, celebrities, thought leaders, friends, family, and more.
- Like a simplified version of Facebook, Instagram is an entirely visual platform, meaning its sole purpose is to enable users to share images or videos with their audience.
- Users can upload images and video clips ranging from 3 seconds to 60, depending on which way you **post your video**. You can also embellish your images and videos using filters, gifs, and other fun tools.

- You cannot add links to your posts or video clips. Only one link on your biography page can be used, and depending on what you have going on, you're advised to switch out the link each time you have a new topic or follower request.
- You can't post to Instagram using a desktop computer. Rather, you have to post via mobile phone, or you can use a social media manager such as **Hootsuite** or **Later** to schedule out.

### PRO-TIP:

*While you can't put links directly in your posts, you can sign up for a "mini-menu" of important links that you can put in your bio. And there are several platforms to choose from! Check out **Lnk.Bio**, **Linkr.bio**, and **Linktree** to compare features and sign up for the best one for your church.*

## SAMPLE INSTAGRAM SCHEDULE

There are lots of ways you can utilize Instagram for your own parish that are engaging and inspiring. Instead of looking at a weekly schedule, check out a list of ideas your parish can choose from!

## Events — Past and Upcoming!

Did you have a recent festival or parish-sponsored event? What about a compelling flyer with all the information on where and when? Upload some images of the day to Instagram (bonus if they are interesting to look at and high-resolution) and watch the likes come in!

## Inspiring Images

Images of Catholic saints, inspiring words from well-known Catholic figures, pretty landscapes with a few hashtags, all of these inspire people to click and follow for more. Some accounts to check out are *Dynamic Catholic*, *Word on Fire* and *Pope Francis*.

## Parish Life

It's all about helping people to know your parish. Include parishioner highlights with personal testimonies, a "volunteer of the week," or ministry snapshots to highlight all that your parish does, both within and outside the walls!



### PRO-TIP:

*Running a parish is hard, and when you throw in curating social media content for your parish, it's just another hurdle. With WeCreate, you'll find the latest in stock photography, church clip art, Catholic prayers, weekly Gospel reflections, and more. And if you're a bulletin customer, you already have access!*

## FACEBOOK

What once was an online platform strictly for college students to chat after hours, is now a booming billion-dollar business that encompasses Fortune 500 businesses advertising their goods, and grandparents sharing photos of their grandchildren. As of early 2021, there are approximately 2.85 billion monthly active users on Facebook, and that number is growing by the day. If your parish has yet to join this extremely popular online community, it's time to hop on the bandwagon.

From sharing news of your thriving faith community, photos from your latest festival, and Father's latest Gospel reflection, there are numerous ways you can utilize Facebook for Christ.

## First, Some Stats

- Facebook is a social networking platform where users can post comments, share photographs, and post links to news or other interesting content on the web, chat live, and watch short videos.
- There is no official character count, but less is more when it comes to grabbing followers' attentions!
- Facebook supports group pages, fan pages, and business pages that let businesses use it as a channel for social media marketing.
- You can stream video live using Facebook Live (in fact, Facebook Live was often the way that parishes livestreamed their Masses during COVID-19).
- In addition to a communication platform, Facebook also offers digital advertising, a buy/sell community (known as Facebook Marketplace), the ability to accept online payments, and much more.

## PARISHES & DIOCESES TO FOLLOW ON FACEBOOK

Looking for a little inspiration? From the use of live video to everyday inspirations, check out these parishes and dioceses that take social media engagement to the next level.

### Prince of Peace Catholic Community – Houston, Texas

A mixture of livestreaming Mass and inspirational quotes, reflections, parish updates and high-quality photos to tie everything together, this parish gets great engagement with followers.

### Archdiocese of Detroit

From events throughout the archdiocese, Mass livestreamed by the bishops at the cathedral, Gospel reflections and more, the Archdiocese of Detroit's



Facebook page is a great example of one religious organization promoting the good works of parishes far and wide.

### **St. Anthony the Hermit Parish – Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin**

The faith community of St. Anthony the Hermit Parish posts on a regular basis, inspirational quotes, upcoming events about the parish, and images from Mass and processions. It gives an authentic glimpse of life at the parish and invites you to come and experience it yourself.

### **St. Patrick – St. Anthony Church – Hartford, Connecticut**

Livestreamed Masses, Gospel reflections from the pastor, live “off-the-cuff” announcements, and invitations to sign up for the weekly newsletter, the St. Patrick-St. Anthony communities have a lot going on.



## **SAMPLE PARISH FACEBOOK SCHEDULE**

There is so much happening within your faith community — it’s time to let everyone know about it! From livestreaming Mass to Gospel reflections, inspirational quotes, and upcoming events, Facebook is one of the most perfect platforms around to get the message out. Check out this sample content schedule, and feel free to edit/add for your own faith community!

### **Monday**

Our parish is proud to offer an easy, hassle-free way of supporting our community — online giving! Become a recurring donor today and support our parish no matter where you find yourself! Sign up today.

### **Tuesday**

“Faith is to believe what you do not see. The reward of faith is to see what you believe.” St. Augustine of Hippo

### **Wednesday**

This week, Fr. Patrick shares with us his thoughts on how the upcoming Gospel can be applied to our everyday lives. Read, react, share with a friend!

### **Thursday**

Face-to-face and anonymous confessions are available this afternoon (and every Thursday!) at 4 p.m. If that time doesn’t work for you, feel free to contact us to make an appointment. Has it been a while? Don’t stress, we’re here for you!

### **Friday**

Every Friday, we come together to pray collectively for the members of our parish most in need of support. Have a prayer request? Add it here! Come Holy Spirit, Come!

### **Saturday**

Mass of Anticipation begins at 4:30 p.m. — we can’t wait to see you! Be sure to grab a bulletin on the way out or download it through our website to read on the go!

### **Sunday**

Join us for Mass at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., and 1 p.m. Afterwards, stick around for donuts, coffee, and fellowship with friends! What a beautiful day to receive Jesus Christ in the Eucharist!

## **TWITTER**

What once was an unfamiliar word to the general population is now a verb used in our everyday conversations: tweeting. Twitter is among the top 3 social networking apps in the United States and boasts more than 350 million active users. From soccer moms to CEOs, Fortune 500s to local businesses, Pepsi to Pope Francis, millions worldwide have found a way to get their message across — 280 characters or less at a time.

You may not think that your parish would have a place on this trendy platform but think again. When it comes to social media, it isn’t about transforming who you are as a parish, but rather reworking how you communicate specifically for the platform. As Church, we’re tasked with meeting people where they are, in order to help them form an authentic relationship with Christ. For many of our communities, that includes reaching out to those on Twitter, too.

### **First, Some Stats**

- Twitter is a social media platform that allows users to send out brief messages of 280 characters or less (it used to be 140 but was **doubled** in 2017).
- Users can post messages, images, videos, and gifs.

- Twitter utilizes hashtags in order to group together common themes and allow for easier searching. Examples include #God #Summer #FunInTheSun #Books ... you get the idea.
- Each account has a personal homepage where all their tweets, retweets, and activity are gathered, but users primarily use Twitter by scrolling through their personal feeds.

## HOW TO FIND CONTENT TO GROW YOUR ACCOUNT

You may not think of it, but your weekly bulletin is the perfect place to find content for your social media channels. From weekly readings to upcoming events, Gospel reflections from the pastor's desk to requested items for the food pantry, a lot of information can be found in this staple communication vehicle.

You can find other things to tweet as well by following some well-known figures. Pope Francis, for example, posts quotes on the regular, and is followed by more than 18.8 million people worldwide. Help his message travel further by retweeting him once or twice a week.

## SAMPLE PARISH TWITTER SCHEDULE

Your parish has good, solid content you can use to engage and grow your followers. You just need to revise what you have. Check out this sample content schedule, and feel free to edit/add for your own faith community!

### Monday

You may notice the readings for this week have a common theme: Do not be afraid! Prepare for the week by looking at the readings and spending some time in #prayer. #JPil #Faith #Detroit

### Tuesday

One of our parish family members is looking for help in shoveling their driveway while dealing with health issues. Can you help? Contact Dan at the parish office (555) 555-5555. Thanks for being generous with your time!

### Wednesday

This week we celebrate St. Maria Faustina, a Polish Catholic nun & mystic. She was chosen by Jesus to proclaim his powerful message of Divine Mercy. Learn about her life & how she continues to help us here on earth today. St. Faustina, pray for us! [tinyurl.com/2ekkdcev](http://tinyurl.com/2ekkdcev)

### Thursday

Fr. Peter will be available for #Confession today from 3 to 5 p.m. If it's been a while, stop by and experience the healing power of this incredible sacrament!

### Friday

Today, let's pray for all the names that have been added to our book of prayers this week. May God give us strength, guidance and preservice to continue in His name. Amen!

### Saturday

Our weekend bulletin has arrived! Our spotlight business of the week is Dan's Auto Repair. Bring a copy of the bulletin to his garage for \$10 off a standard oil change! #Church #Sunday #Coupons

### Sunday

Looking for a sign? This is it! Worship with us TODAY at Mass at 9, 11, and noon. Following each Mass, enjoy our outside #coffee social. Check in with your neighbors, grab a sweet treat, and have fun! #Milwaukee #MKE



**BECAUSE  
BUILDING A  
VIBRANT  
CHURCH  
MATTERS**

01-15-159-21v1



[www.4ipi.com](http://www.4ipi.com)