

Communicating the Gospel Message Today *Using Social Media*

The Gospel Message is Good News! And Good News is always worth sharing.

What follows are the fruits of the work of the Eparchial Pastoral Council on some best practices in sharing the Gospel Message in the world today, taking advantage of social media.

Go and tell others

It's important to remember that as Christians we are first and foremost Easter people.

On that first Easter Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and the others went to see the tomb of Jesus. An angel greeted them, saying: "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised from the dead, as he said. Go quickly and tell his disciples" (Matthew 28: 5-7).

Mary and the others did as they were told. They carried the message of Jesus' resurrection from the dead to his disciples.

The great commissioning of all Christians

The disciples in turn tell others and spread the teachings of Jesus.

This is what the Church calls the "Great Commissioning." Jesus, before ascending to the Father, blessed the disciples and commanded them to carry on his saving work saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptize them, teach them, and fear not, I am with you always." (Matthew 28: 16-20)

Today, we too are called to carry on the work of Jesus. This is the very nature of the Church, to be missionary. We have the duty to announce the Gospel, first at home with our families, then beyond, announcing Christ to others through our love and actions.

Telling others our story

We can best give witness to God in the world by telling others of the joy of the Gospel message.

We all love to tell stories. Bedtime stories. Fairy tales. Stories about our families and friends. Joy-filled stories and sad stories.

Story-telling is an important way of sharing what's important to us. The Bible and the Church have been doing this for centuries, telling the stories of God's family: stories about births and deaths, love stories and stories about family crises.

And today's social media provides us with new opportunities to tell each other our faith story, our life journey together with God.

Using social media

As part of our *25 Year Eparchial Pastoral Plan* and *Vibrant Parishes Renewal* program, we can tell our faith story better by engaging social media in the following ways:

- implement the Eparchial Pastoral Council's *Communication Plan* (attached) as a means to keep parishes and parishioners informed and engaged in the mission of the Church;
- share what's new in the Eparchy of Edmonton with direct emails to pastors and parish pastoral council members and encourage parishes to do the same with their parishioners;
- enhance the Eparchy of Edmonton's presence on the Internet through its website and use of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others;
- develop webpages for each parish and district throughout the Eparchy, helping each parish tell its faith story;
- create search functions to locate parishes and contact information regarding Divine Liturgy times, Easter and Christmas schedules, graveside services, arranging baptisms, marriages and funerals, requesting a sick call or home visit, talking to a priest; etc.;
- invite and train parishes to announce on, and/or upload to, the Web workshops and other activities they are hosting/have hosted;
- share Internet resources and materials for parents and grandparents to support their responsibility as first educators in raising and educating their children in the faith;
- encourage families and individuals to share their faith stories with others on social media; and
- engage the services of a Communications Officer to oversee the implementation of the eparchial communication plan.

The Gospel Message is Good News!

While Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, the world around us is constantly changing. Yet, we can make better use of social media in telling others about Jesus and about our own faith story.

Will you do your part?

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Eparchial Pastoral Council