

# **Designing a Parish Social Ministry Web Page**

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July 2008*

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# Designing a Parish Social Ministry Web Page

## Checklist

Do you want to get the word out about your Parish Social Ministry Committee? Do you want an easy and effective way to communicate with your parish? Would you like your parish to have a quick and easy-to-read resource about Catholic Social Teaching and Social Ministry?

### **Why not create a web page?**

*Here is a checklist to help you get started:*

#### **BEFORE YOU BEGIN:** Getting permission and access

##### ***Talk to your PASTOR***

Ask him if parish social ministry can have a website. Ask him who the webmaster is and how to reach him or her.

##### ***Talk to your WEBMASTER***

Ask how often the website is updated and how much notice is needed to update it. Ask if there is a size limit for content on the web page.

#### **CONTENT:** What to include on your page

##### ***WHO are you and WHAT do you do?***

Give a brief description and list the activities of the PSM committee (time, commitment, responsibility considerations). Don't forget to list an email and a phone number of the contact person so interested parishioners can get more info.

##### ***WHEN and WHERE do you meet?***

Include the meeting time of the committee. Make sure to extend an invitation for all members of your parish to attend.

##### ***7 Themes of Catholic Social Teaching***

Listing the 7 themes gives the viewer an introduction to Catholic Social Teaching.

- \_\_\_ Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- \_\_\_ Call to Family, Community, and Participation
- \_\_\_ Rights and Responsibilities
- \_\_\_ Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- \_\_\_ The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- \_\_\_ Solidarity
- \_\_\_ Care for God's Creation

**Provide examples of how your ministry engages the 7 themes.**

**Remember to celebrate all Social Ministry that is going on in your parish, even if it is not directly related to your committee.**

Visit <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/projects/socialteaching/excerpt.shtml> for more information.



#### **4 Dimensions of Parish Social Ministry**

Listing the 4 pillars gives the viewer a broad picture of what is involved in Parish Social Ministry.

\_\_\_ Direct Service

\_\_\_ Justice Education

\_\_\_ Advocacy

\_\_\_ Empowerment

\_\_\_ **Provide examples of how your ministry reflects the 4 dimensions. Remember to celebrate all Social Ministry that is going on in your Parish, even if it is not directly related to your committee.**

Visit <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/saltandlight.shtml.orig#roots> for more information.



#### **Links to Social Justice Resources**

Include links to important social justice organizations, especially church agencies and groups that your ministry supports.

\_\_\_ Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry: <http://www.catholicsocialjustice.org>

\_\_\_ CT Catholic Public Affairs Council: <http://www.ctcatholic.org>

\_\_\_ Catholic Campaign for Human Development: <http://www.usccb.org/cchd>

\_\_\_ Catholic Relief Services: <http://www.crs.org>

\_\_\_ Catholic Charities USA: <http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org>

\_\_\_ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: <http://www.usccb.org>

\_\_\_ JustFaith Ministries: <http://www.justfaith.org>

### **FORMAT:** 5 tips for creating an easy-to-read, easy-to-use web page<sup>1</sup>

1. **Nothing Flash-y:** Avoid using Flash applications, scrolling images, site visitor counters, or any other unnecessary feature. These features make the page harder to download, harder to format, and detract from your primary message.
2. **Less is More:** Keep the layout of your page simple and clean, with lots of blank space between paragraphs. Too much clutter might overwhelm the viewer.
3. **Short and Sweet:** Keep the opening page to 3 screens or less in length. Include links to a second page for more in-depth information.
4. **Use a Legible Font:** Most web experts recommend verdana for easy-to-scan, easy-to-read web pages. (This page is composed in verdana)

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<sup>1</sup> The formatting tips in this section were composed by Nichole M. Flores. For more information about formatting read Steve Krug, *Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New Riders Publishing, Berkley, CA, 2006).

**5. Add a Human Touch:** Include stories about and pictures of the people involved in your ministry. Stories and pictures about people and events allow the viewer to connect with the ministry on a personal level. **Make sure to get permission before you use someone's story or picture.**

**DON'T FORGET:** Things to remember as you get started

**Get Some Perspective:** Show your web page to a friend, co-worker or fellow parishioner to get feedback on both content and format.

**Photographs and Larger Documents:** If you include photographs on your web page, consider saving them in a condensed format in order to save space and allow your page to load quickly. You might also consider saving photographs and large documents as PDF files to save space.

**You are not alone:**

- If you feel overwhelmed by the task, get some advice from your parish webmaster
- Try to find people in your parish community who are very gifted with computers and technical skills for help
- The Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry is also happy to help you with ideas or feedback on your web page

## List of Parish Social Ministry Web Pages

*Archdiocese of Hartford*

*Listed below are parishes that currently maintain a Parish Social Ministry (PSM) web page, along with some highlights from their PSM web pages. These pages are featured in this booklet to help give you some ideas on content and format for your own PSM web page.*

### **St. Catherine of Siena – West Simsbury**

<http://www.stcatherine.info/>

Utilizes a “blogging” feature to keep parish community informed about PSM events and other church events.

### **Immaculate Heart of Mary – Harwinton**

<http://www.immaculateheartharwinton.org/socialconcern.htm>

Contact information for the committee along with a description of the committee's work.

### **Our Lady of the Assumption – Woodbridge**

[http://www.assumptionchurch.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=20&Itemid=28](http://www.assumptionchurch.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20&Itemid=28)

Detailed outline of the work of the PSM, including mission, contacts, objectives, fundraisers, goals and activities (including legislative action).

### **Sacred Heart Church – Southbury**

<http://www.sacredheartchurch.info/ministry.html>

Invitation to become involved with Social Concerns Committee, JustFaith, JusticeWalking, Respect Life, and many other parish ministries.

### **St. Thomas the Apostle – West Hartford**

<http://www.stawh.org/sub314.aspx>

Invitation to join the committee, contact info, list of activities, and important principles in Catholic Social Teaching.

### **St. Dominic – Southington**

<http://saintdominics.com/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=68>

Features mission statement, contact info, and an extensive list of PSM activities.

### **St. Joseph – Bristol**

<http://www.stjosephbristol.org/social-justice>

Extensive list of PSM activities along with pictures from recent events. A good example of well-formatted pictures that do not take up too much space.

### **St. Elizabeth Seton – Rocky Hill**

[http://www.stesetonchurch.org/NAV%20Eileen%20Pages/social\\_ministry.htm](http://www.stesetonchurch.org/NAV%20Eileen%20Pages/social_ministry.htm)

Contact info for the Social Ministries Council, as well as good descriptions of different ministries.

### **St. James Church – Rocky Hill**

[http://www.stesetonchurch.org/Eileen%20Pages/social\\_ministry.htm](http://www.stesetonchurch.org/Eileen%20Pages/social_ministry.htm)

Links to social ministry opportunities and descriptions of various PSM activities.

### **St. Patrick and St. Anthony – Hartford**

<http://www.spsact.org/sites/outreach/volunteer.html>

Lists social justice activities and invites the community to join the committee.

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