

PPC Discussion Document 3¹

Parish Communications

Step 1: Examine the present reality in our parish

- How do we use the internet and social media to share news of our parish?
- How do we use the parish newsletter to share the Good News of Jesus Christ?
- How does the PPC communicate with the parish?
- How do we use local papers and radio?

Step 2: Take time to reflect

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

Advertising agencies approach client campaigns in two different ways: “frequency” and “reach”. “Frequency” means how many times each person is touched by a message. “Reach” means how many people you can touch in a given area or market. Good advertising campaigns always aim for a frequency of at least three. They claim that the reach is not nearly as important as a minimum frequency of three. In other words, no matter how many people you send messages to, each person who received the message has to receive it at least three times to be effective. Strictly speaking, frequency is much more important than reach.

Let's translate this idea into church terms for a moment. We put an announcement in the parish bulletin only to find it completely ignored. We tell everyone that an event deadline for registration exists and yet no one signs up on time. We send costly letters to parishioners asking for help yet no one calls. What is the problem here? Why are our parishioners inattentive or unresponsive to our messages? We would like to believe that everyone on the mailing list is as interested in the parish as we are. Yet, they don't seem to pay

¹ This discussion document has been developed by The Pastoral Renewal Team of the Kerry Diocese and is shared with the Parish Pastoral Councils of the Elphin Diocese with permission.

attention to what we are telling them. Perhaps the problem is that we haven't thought about this "rule of threes".

Perhaps we need to think in the same terms: more attention to frequency. Keep this new rule, the 'Rule of Three', in your mind as you examine communications in your parish².

Step 3: Explore various options

Having looked at the reality of communications in our parish and taken time to reflect on what James Reinhardt suggests in his book *22 Steps to a Great Catholic Parish*, explore the various possibilities of how our parish could enhance its use of communications.

Step 4: Identify specific actions

- Informed by the discussion and reflection, identify specific actions that we could carry out in order to improve our use of different means of communication;
- If no action has been agreed, identify what further research is needed.

Step 5: When the action is completed take time to review it by exploring:

- Did the action achieve its purpose?
- What was not effective?
- Is there a follow-up action needed?

² Taken from: James N. Reinhardt, *22 Steps to a Great Catholic Parish*, CMD Book Source 2010.