

Full-color Bulletins Help Parishes Communicate 'Good News'

TOPSFIELD -- A local Catholic parish service provider recently marked its fifth anniversary helping parishes enhance methods of communicating with parishioners.

Topsfield based Parish Communication Solutions, Inc., more commonly known as PARISHCOMM, offers a variety of services -- from bulletins to Web presence -- to parishes in the North Shore.

"Typically, we go in and look at the 'tools' with which a pastor, both directly and through his staff, is able to communicate effectively with his flock," said president and CEO Paul Blanchette. "Then," he continued, "at no cost whatsoever to the parish, we go about providing upgrades across the board."

"We suggest that parishes use their bulletin cover to communicate front page news," said vice president of sales and development, Bill Habib.

"In publishing parish bulletins, we believe the concept of front page news has two applications," he explained. "The first application of front page news is 'The Good News of the Gospel,' whereby the bulletin cover would feature museum quality artwork or custom designed images, complete with a passage from Scripture, to illustrate the essence of each week's Gospel reading. The other application of front page news is 'noteworthy parish news,' whereby the bulletin cover could depict a full-color digital photograph of important parish events, such as the previous week's first Communion or Confirmation class."

The bulletins are printed in high gloss paper and in full color. They offer parishes the flexibility to fluctuate the number of pages and bulletin quantities from week to week.

They also provide free training, free access to a substantial bulletin content resource, including but not limited to a wide selection of Gospel-related covers, high-quality bulletin clip art, thought-provoking spiritual reflections and an informative Question & Answer column that teaches us about our faith.

In addition to bolstering a parish's weekly bulletin, the company examines the computer hardware component of a parish's communication system. "In many cases, we purchase new PCs, which we will install and network for the parish, again at no cost," Blanchette said.

"From that point, we're ready to purchase ParishSOFT -- sophisticated data management software, designed specifically for Catholic Parishes, to help manage the business of a parish, including all of its ministries," he added.

PARISHCOMM also designs parish Web sites. In addition, they offer free hosting and posting services to maintain the Web site information as being current.

"We're a small family business, and we treat the people in the parishes we serve like extended family members. The accolades we've received from pastors, staff and parishioners have been very humbling" Blanchette said.