



## Catholic Websites: Tools for Evangelization Making the best use of your website for the Mission of the Church

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### 82% of all Americans use the internet.

- 100% under age 24
- 91% ages 36-45
- 86% ages 46-55

Of these internet users:

### 92% use email.

- How can your site use email better?
- Ideas:
  - Collect email addresses through your website, at events hosted by your parish/ministry, program registrations.
  - Permission must be given by all subscribers or you will get blacklisted as a spammer!
  - For small lists, hide recipients by using the BCC field (never the TO or CC)
  - For larger lists, use a very user-friendly e-blast service that is very easy for people to unsubscribe from.
  - Send out news, announcements, messages from the Pastor or Director, invitations to attend events, spiritual reflections, reasons to re-visit the website, reminders of sacramental and liturgical events (feast days, Saint of the Week).
  - Send personal messages for one-on-one outreach (Happy Birthday, Congratulations, Sympathy, Get Well, etc.)
- Examples:
  - <http://parishmail.net/> (see demo at <http://parishmail.net/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi>)
  - <http://on-eagleswings.net/>
  - <http://cathedralofmary.org/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi>

### 91% use the internet to stay informed about social causes

### 92% use search engines to find information.

- What kind of information might people search for that your website provides?
- Ideas:
  - Faith-based articles, personal testimonies, Catholic prayers, heroic saints.
  - Social justice teachings applied to current news or daily life issues that directly affect the person you're reaching out to (abuse, alcoholism, unemployment, natural disasters, etc.)

- Examples:
  - [http://wordbytes.org/doctrine/natural\\_disasters.htm](http://wordbytes.org/doctrine/natural_disasters.htm)
  - <http://wordbytes.org/prayers/Rosary/index.html>
  - <http://wordbytes.org/saints/DailyPrayers/PaulCross.htm>
  - <http://cathedralofmary.org/faith/catechism/index.html>
  - <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate/>

### 32% look for religious/spiritual info

### 76% use it to get news

- What news is pertinent to your parish or your website's ministry?
- How will you keep it current?
- Ideas: church bulletin, interactive google map to your church, Catholic news widgets.
- Find RSS feeds (a few are listed below) from Catholic news sources and post them on your website by pasting the URL into a news feed widget.
- Subscribe Catholic youtube channels and paste into your webpage the code for youtube videos you want others to see.
- Examples of Catholic widgets:
  - <http://cathedralofmary.org/news/index.html>
  - <http://gnm.org/DailyReflections/widget.htm>
  - <http://cathedralofmary.org/faith/index.html>
- Create your own widget at <http://www.springwidgets.com/>
- A few news sources:
  - <http://the-american-catholic.com/>
  - <http://www.youtube.com/vatican>
  - <http://www.youtube.com/catholicnewsagency>
  - <http://www.usccb.org/video/reflections.shtml>
  - <http://www.youtube.com/paulistfathers>
- RSS news feeds:
  - <http://feeds.feedburner.com/catholicnewsagency/dailynews>
  - <http://www.zenit.org/english/zenit.xml>
  - <http://feedity.com/rss.aspx/catholicnews-com/UVNXUVU>
  - <http://feedity.com/rss.aspx/catholicnews-com/VVdQUFM>
- Catholic Life RSS feeds
  - <http://www.osvdailytake.com/feeds/posts/default>
  - <http://feeds2.feedburner.com/faithandfamilylive?format=xml>
  - <http://feedity.com/rss.aspx/catholicnews-com/VVRTW1Q>
  - <http://www.lifeteen.com/RSS/podcasts/movies/movies.xml>
  - <http://ncronline.org/blogs/john-l-allen-jr/feed>
- RSS feeds and Youtube for Catholic Radio & TV
  - <http://www.catholictv.com/ Documents/RSS/latest-rss.xml>
  - <http://www.catholictv.com/ Documents/RSS/series-29-episodes.xml>
  - <http://feeds.feedburner.com/AmericanCatholicRadio>
  - <http://www.youtube.com/CatholicTV>

**72% surf the internet looking for fun.**

- For parish sites, what fun events are you advertising?
- For any ministry, what's a fun way to present it?
- Ideas: Kid's puzzles, interactive webpages that lead the user to new discoveries, PPT presentations converted into interactive flash movies.
- Examples:
  - <http://schoolofthecathedral.org/kidskornet/index.htm>
  - <http://wordbytes.org/Lent/PassionRetreat/index2.html>
  - <http://cathedralofmary.org/homeflash.htm>
  - <http://www.lifeteen.com/>
  - <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/quizzes/>

**71% watch videos.**

- If your parish or ministry were advertised on TV, what would that look like?
- Ideas: Make a YouTube video!
  - Youtube made from videos
  - Youtube made from slide shows and converted to youtube format with software such as <http://www.winavi.com/en/video-converter/video-converter.htm>
  - Convert PPT presentations into Flash movies for an interactive teaching tool, using software such as [http://www.ispringsolutions.com/products/ispring\\_pro.html](http://www.ispringsolutions.com/products/ispring_pro.html)
- Examples of youtube videos made first as slide shows:
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUkeW9I4xWg>
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R96qpDqXGIs>
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsFtk2FnwKo>
- Example of a PPT-Flash teaching tool:
  - <http://cathedralofmary.org/faith/faithpoints/>

**51% take virtual tours.**

- Provide a tour of church facilities or a pilgrimage. Audio, not just photos and text!
- How can you use this to inspire and educate?
- Examples:
  - <http://cathedralofmary.org/cathedral/tour/index.html>
  - <http://www.cathedralbasilica.org/tour/nojava/index.shtml>
  - <http://www.wordbytes.org/holyland/index.html>
  - <http://www.jerusalemviacrucis.org/First%20Map.html>

**37% upload photos to share.**

- Online galleries (Google's Picasa, Flickr, etc.) and social networking sites (Facebook, etc.) make photos easy to share and interactive.
- Ideas: Make slideshows with
  - PDF slide show using Adobe's *free* Photoshop Album Starter Edition (no longer available from Adobe's website, so download it from the following link) [http://rtmodica.net/Photoshop\\_albumSE\\_en\\_us\\_320.zip](http://rtmodica.net/Photoshop_albumSE_en_us_320.zip)
  - Web albums
    - <http://picasa.google.com/features.html>
    - <http://www.flickr.com/>
- Examples:
  - <http://gnm.org/meditations/index.html>
  - <http://rtmodica.net/album/2006/AlbanyShrines.pdf>
  - <http://cathedralofmary.org/gallery/index.html>

**75% use social networking sites.**

- Ideas:
  - Embed them into your website.
  - Use these sites as a marketing tool to bring people to your own website. This spreads links to your site "virally" (your "friends" share them with their "friends" and so on).
  - Use an application ("app") like HootSuite to keep track of stats on your Twitter click-thoughts, pre-schedule your "tweets", etc. <http://hootsuite.com>
- Examples:
  - Join me on my facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/terry.modica>
  - <http://www.facebook.com/paulistfathers>
  - <http://cathedralofmary.org/parish/scouts/Troop1000/facebook.htm>
  - <http://twitter.com/goodnewsmin>
  - <http://twitter.com/usccbmedia>
  - <http://twitter.com/PaulistFathers>
  - <http://twitter.com/CatholicNewsSvc>

**32% read someone else's blog.**

- Ideas:
  - What are you an expert on?
  - What kinds of questions are you frequently asked that you could turn into blog discussions?
  - Gather faith-based questions via the website, promoted through the bulletin and e-blasts, and pre-planned by you or the staff or the Evangelization Committee, then blog the answers.
  - Clergy and/or various parish community leaders can collaborate on the blog by taking turns providing answers in the blog.
- Examples:
  - <http://gnmforum.blogspot.com/> (Good News Stepping Stones)
  - <http://catholicdr.blogspot.com/> (Ministry Fare)

**Generate your own reason for using the website!**

- Find ways to weave what's on the website with what you're already doing in ministry.
  - For example: As a follow-up to an educational gathering (youth ministry, religious education class, adult scripture study, etc.) post an exercise or article or video on the website that further enhances what you tried to teach. Tell the class that it will be discussed at the next gathering.

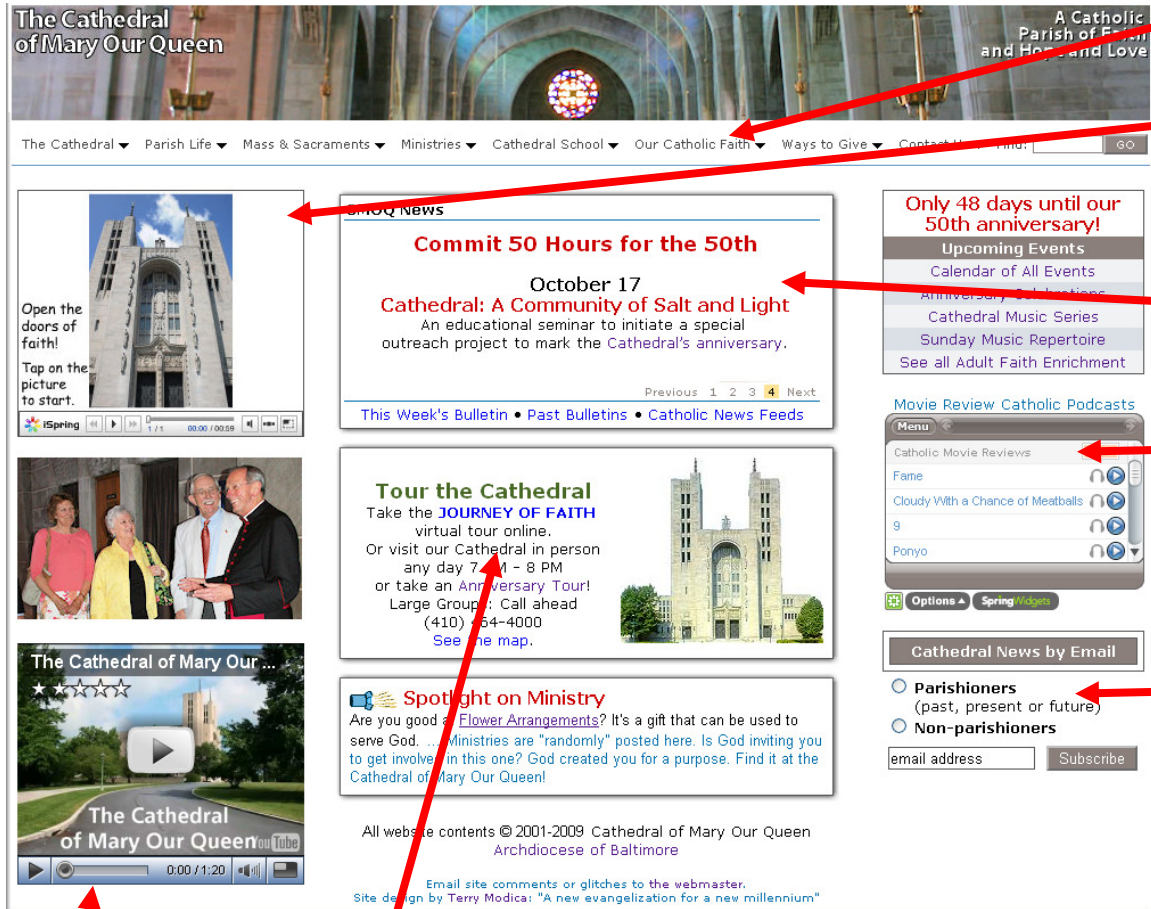
**To network with and learn from other Christian web designers**

- Join the Good News Web Designers Association: <http://gnwda.org>

**See how several Web 2.0 tools can be embedded on the home page as a portal to draw in all generations of website visitors (next page).**

Example Site: The Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Baltimore, MD

http://cathedralofmary.org



Easy navigation

Interactive Flash movie made from a PPT presentation

Constantly updated news

Family-friendly movie reviews in a widget using RSS feeds

E-blast subscription form

Youtube video

Virtual tour