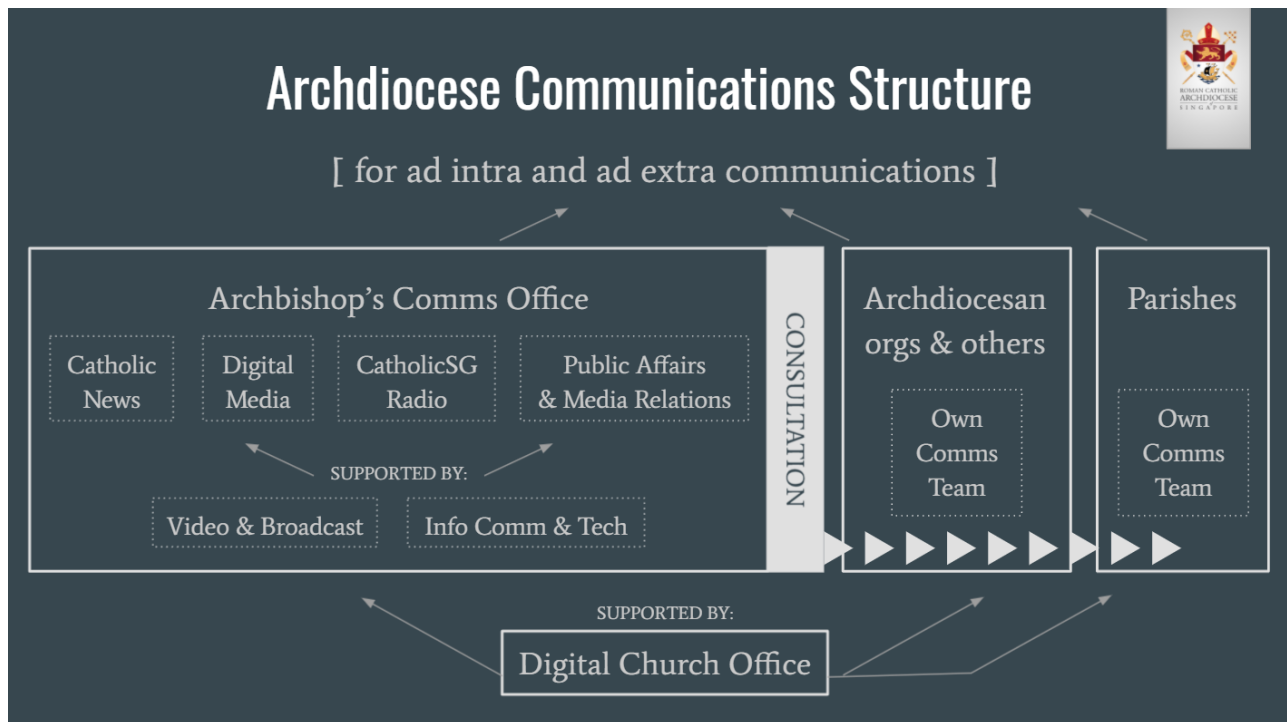


A report from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of SINGAPORE 2021

For the Regional Commission for Social Communications

Archdiocese Communications Structure



Overview of 2020-21

Besides our regular programmes and initiatives on print, radio and digital media, we met the challenges brought on by the pandemic with these thrusts/topics:

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Increased efforts: Direct to the faithful; empowering them by providing timely information; did this in close collaboration with parishes and organisations.

BACK TO CHURCH

Operational and Safety projects and initiatives were put in place (by the Covid-19 Taskforce) to encourage the faithful to come back physically to Mass in our churches.

CATHOLIC200SG

Our Archdiocese celebrates 200 years of catholicism in Singapore this year, and ArchComms is supporting Catholic200SG initiatives through promulgation of content and events to help launch a new era of faith.

Activities for Public Affairs and Media Relations

An Exercise of Building Confidence:

- We had to **assure our priests, parishes and Archdiocesan Orgs** that we had understood the necessary safe management measures that needed to be implemented on the ground
- We needed to **assure the faithful** that they would have an opportunity to come back to church physically in a fair and safe manner - giving all the assurance that their health and safety were our utmost concern. And this is where we were blessed to have the Digital Church Office up and running
- We had to **assure the Government** that we understood and complied with the necessary laws and measures that were in place
- Via the Secular Media Outlets that contacted us - we were able to **give the people of Singapore confidence** that the Catholic Church had the Covid-19 situation under control in terms of our safe management measures and plans - so that we might not become a vector of infection

Activities for CatholicNews PRINT

There are challenges faced by CN due to the drop in number of hardcopies (Catholics not going to churches) so there was more effort to enhance online experience, leading to:

- A revamp of our CN website to make it better-looking and user-friendly in this Covid-19 digital age, whether for readers, subscribers or advertisers. This has translated into more visitors to the website and an increase in subscriptions of the hardcopy made online.
- CatholicNews now promotes and cross-sells their key stories which they have on a particular edition in a weekly roundup collaboration with CatholicSG Radio. The Radio interview is done by either the Editing Manager or Correspondent who give interesting insights to their stories. So this is another step into the digital arena for CatholicNews.
- Most stories are locally sourced and written as compared to before. International news now mainly comes from the Vatican and the Holy See Press Office.
- Style of writing in the Catholic News has also changed. We have shifted from 'report writing' to a more interview and informative style that gives readers more faith formation and informing readers about the relevance of Catholic Social Teachings, explaining the CCC and the principles and importance of Sacred Tradition, being part of the universal Church; and now providing greater exposure for the Synod which has just been convened.

Activities for CatholicSG RADIO

Podcast publishing

CatholicSG Radio is our online internet streaming platform - and while people are still listening to Radio the old fashioned way - we had to very quickly recognise that people today also consume Media very differently.

So in a partnership of traditional media together with on-demand media we hope to meet the needs of a generation that consumes media as and when they want it.

Since October 2020, we've published podcasts on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Amazon Music, to reach individuals using those platforms. We now have 13 programme podcasts available on these external platforms.

We also have started curating music playlists on Spotify.

Facebook

CatholicSG Radio launched a Facebook page in January 2021 to engage listeners better, and keep listeners updated on recent content

The other reason for launching our FB page is for us to use it as a video streaming platform - with the capability of bringing Radio both with sound and picture to our audiences.

We were successful with our Catholic200SG Ignite Talks series - these were discussions with priests of the Archdiocese in a special series of thought-provoking talks about being Catholic in Singapore as we celebrate 200 years of faith.

Revamped Website

- Revamped our website to make it more appealing and user-friendly.
- A one-stop resource that includes programme schedules and highlights of recent talk shows.
- It also includes a web player, for those who prefer to listen to the livestream on a web browser (instead of the app).

Introduced LIVE shows

For the first two years of our existence (2 June 2019) all our programmes were pre-recorded and then digitally uploaded. But when we were ready and given the greenlight to go 'LIVE' - engagement with our audience was something we are working on constantly and we hope to build that over the months and years.

It's also providential that we went with live presentations in June 2021 - during this Covid-19 situation many people are cooped up in their homes and for many listening to music, prayers, conversations about faith and faith stories - uplifts the spirits of the old, young, sick and lonely.

Our LIVE shows in June 2021, 3 times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays) [in the morning, mid-day and evening]. This was done to:

- Harness Radio's advantage of communicating to audience in real-time
- Promote listener engagement; elicit comments, questions, song dedications and prayer intentions which can be sent through via WhatsApp
- Be more of a personal prayer and faith companion to our listener

In addition, existing talk shows were incorporated into the Live programmes.

New ones were added, bumping up content creation to a total of 10 talk shows every week.

These programmes cover a wide breadth of topics that matter to people, including:

- **Faith formation:** Off the Pulpit, Prayer and Spirituality Insights
- **Faith story sharing:** Kopi Talk, Hidden Journeys, O I C
- **Current Affairs (in and out of the Church):** The Faith Perspective, Catholic News Round-up
- **Parenting:** Faith@Home
- **Young Adulthood:** At the Table
- **Total Wellness:** The Bright Side

CatholicSG Radio - Quick numbers

Here are some quick numbers, to illustrate our reach and impact.

- Average of 6,000 monthly livestream uniques by IP address on app. Total Listenership of the livestream is 15,000 (6,000 x 2.5) listeners.
- Podcast listenership is estimated at 3,000 (2,200 on app + 800 on external platforms) a month
- Around 1,800 podcasts were uploaded in the past year
- Around 250 interviews have been conducted in the past year

Activities for Digital Media ONLINE

Impact of the Pandemic

- The COVID-19 Pandemic led to a seismic shift in how media is consumed and how people connect with each other.
- Constraints, like lockdowns and what the Singapore government termed as circuit-breakers, led to most spiritual and community activities to be held online
- Restrictions led to a deeper hunger for spiritual input, community and information, which in turn led to the unprecedented use of online platforms by many if not all sections of our demographic - young and old, active and the not-so active.
- The obvious result of this is the dramatic increase of use and dependence on Church online channels

Websites & Mobile App

- We've updated the Archdiocese website with a refreshed look and a new menu navigation. This includes quick access to updates on COVID-19 and its impact on our Church.
- Because of the increased dependence on our website, we launched lite.catholic.sg, a super-fast loading backup site containing key information
- We've also updated the menu and interface on our existing CatholicSG mobile app to meet the enhanced needs of the faithful

Workshops & Conferences

- For World Communications Day 2020, we went 100% online with a series of workshops to empower church workers and volunteers with photography, writing, design, podcasting and videography
- Our approach for WCD 2021 however, was more focussed on encouraging individuals, parishes and church organisations to Go.See.Share
- We organised a Digital Media Conference in 2020 entitled IGNITE (this was in collaboration with Catholic200SG), and we will be doing another DMC in Nov this year.
- There was also a separate one done on POISONED FRUIT to address why fake news can hurt our faith

Collaboration and Promotion of Events - Organisations

- As our Church went online, this meant activities for Catholics would be too. But Church organisations had a challenge to reach out to the masses.
- One of the things we did was to collaborate with them on online activities while helping them to reach out to as many Catholics as possible.
- A few examples done with one of our organisations - the Office for New Evangelisation: A faith formation series, the Catholyst conference and the Mission Rally

Collaboration and Promotion of Events - Parishes

- Collaboration with parishes is important as well
- Examples of activities done by the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd are 24hr Perpetual Adoration, Reflections for Children, and Stations of the cross

Collaboration and Promotion of Events - 1 Stop Solution

- We help Archdiocesan collaborators with awareness-building.
- Because our faithful are on different platforms, we needed to reach them where they are, and allow our Church organisations to do the same.
- So one initiative was to allow event organisers to promote their activities easily on up to 6 different platforms by completing a single online form.
- Events could possibly be promoted on our Website, Telegram, Mobile App, CatholicNews, CatholicSG Radio, and even social media.

Online Videos Enhanced - Quick Numbers

Presently videos remain to be a very important tool for us. To illustrate its impact, here are some quick numbers for Youtube only:

- To-date our Youtube channel has over 107,000 subscribers
- During Oct 2020-21 we've published 480 videos there
- As a result, Youtube users were made aware of our video content 81 million times
- This and other means, led to our videos being watched 9.5 million times

Online Videos Enhanced - Content

- Since Feb 2020 we've webcasted Masses daily on Youtube
- These are supplemented with our homily extract videos for those just wanting a few minutes of spiritual input
- These videos and webcasts were critical in the increase of our subscriber base
- As part of the Catholic200SG collaboration efforts, the IGNITE Talk Shows were produced together with CatholicSG Radio
- To increase viewership to more segments, we developed new styles and series of videos.
- Examples of new series include - Good Grief, Keeping it Real, and Let's Talk
- Examples of new styled videos are - 72-hour Eco-friendly Challenge, What Kids Say, and Fathers' Confession
- Examples of other types of videos - Inspiring faith stories (videos and articles), Teachings and presentations online, Worship and prayer services online, and other videos from collaborative Church organisations

Social Media & Instant Messaging

- We manage over 20 web, app, social media and instant messaging channels
- This number reflects on our strategy of being present where the people are in different demographic segments, and to always look for new opportunities online to evangelise
- One example is a new Telegram channel that we launched in June 2021, to counter profit-driven algorithms on social media, and to ride on the WhatsApp exodus some time back.
- For 2021, besides our regular programming of content, we worked closely with the Catholic200SG team. However, we still continued and heightened collaboration work with various church organisations

Statistics of our Online Channels - Numbers at a glance

This summary gives an idea of how (1) good Catholic content, when coupled with (2) an increased demand (in this case, circumstances due to the pandemic) can result in a dramatic growth

- In 2019 we produced 5600 posts and ramped it up in 2020 when we produced 7200 posts
- In 2019 the posts reached 20.7 million users, while the increased input in 2020, reached 45 million users

- In 2019 the input then resulted in 38.6 million views, while the increased input in 2020 gave us 140.2 million views

We see the compound or exponential effect here:

- a 30% increase of input resulted in
- a 215% increase in reach
- which relates to the 360% increase in views

myCatholicSG Web Application

by Digital Church Office (DCO)

- The DCO was newly set up and worked on helping the Church manage numbers so that she can adhere to safety regulations during the pandemic. The result of their efforts is a new online portal - myCatholicSG which incorporates the registration for Catholics in Singapore, and Mass booking function for parishes.
- The portal was launched in June 2020
- To-date, there are over 160,000 Catholics registered (about 40% of our Catholic pop.)
- Of which 126,000 made at least 1 booking for Mass (about 35% of our Catholic pop.)
- The system have facilitated 2.75 million Mass bookings so far
- There are more possibilities for myCatholicSG and work has already begun in adding the applications that will help the Church serve her flock better in the years to come.
- Some initiatives include event bookings, online payments, registration for catechism, and so on.
- As Catholics rely more and more on the portal, it will grow into a key asset for communications in the near future, as Archcomms continue in close collaboration with them