

## Parish Communications

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# Parish Communications Audit

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A structured worksheet for producing an honest, non-judgmental view of a parish's actual communications output over a specific period. Usually reveals that the output is structurally flat across the liturgical year.

Conducted by the parish secretary or a PPC member, in a single focused afternoon, with the last four or eight weeks of parish bulletins, website posts, social media, and emails gathered in one place.

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### THE WORKSHEET

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#### PAGE 1: INTRODUCTION AND GATHERING

##### Parish Communications Audit

Parish of [parish name]

Conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Audit period (four or eight weeks recommended):**

From: \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of audit:** \_\_\_\_\_

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#### WHAT THIS AUDIT IS FOR

This audit is not a performance review of anyone. It is not a building block for a grand strategy document. It is a way of producing, in one afternoon, an honest picture of what your parish's communications actually look like over a specific period.

Most parishes that do this for the first time are surprised by the patterns it reveals. The surprise is usually useful.

#### WHAT YOU NEED BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Gather the following for the audit period (usually the last four weeks; eight if you want a richer view):

- **Parish bulletins** (every issue from the period).
- **Website posts and updates** (news items, events, announcements).
- **Social media posts** (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, whichever your parish uses).
- **Email communications** to parishioners (if you send any beyond the bulletin).
- **Notices read aloud at Mass** (if you keep a record).
- **Any printed materials** distributed during the period (flyers, posters, cards).

If some of these do not exist or were not recorded, that is itself a finding. Note the gap and proceed with what you have.

#### THE POSTURE FOR THIS AUDIT

Do this afternoon as an observer, not a judge. You are not looking to prove anything. You are looking to see what is actually happening. Surprise and curiosity are more useful than criticism.

If you find patterns you do not like, note them without blame. The people producing parish communications, you included, have been doing the best they could with the frameworks available. The audit is how the framework changes.

Bring tea. Take your time.

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## PAGE 2: THE TALLY

For each week in your audit period, fill in the grid below. One row per week. If you have a longer audit period, photocopy or print additional tally sheets.

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### WEEK 1

Date range: \_\_\_\_\_

Total items communicated this week (across all channels): \_

Liturgical week / season: \_\_\_\_\_

Breakdown by content type (tick each item into a category):

CONTENT TYPE	COUNT THIS WEEK
Spiritual (homilies, reflections, saints' days, Scripture commentary)	
Pastoral (bereavement, baptism prep, marriage prep, RCIA, prayer requests)	
Operational (Mass times, confession times, hall bookings, parking, building)	
Community (SVP, social committee, youth, music, outreach, trips)	
Financial (collections, appeals, accounts, capital projects)	
Other (note: _____)	

Any item of particular weight this week: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes on tone, rhythm, or register: \_\_\_\_\_

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### WEEK 2

Date range: \_\_\_\_\_

Total items communicated this week (across all channels): \_

Liturgical week / season: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTENT TYPE	COUNT THIS WEEK
Spiritual	
Pastoral	
Operational	
Community	
Financial	
Other	

Any item of particular weight this week: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes on tone, rhythm, or register: \_\_\_\_\_

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WEEK 3

Date range: \_\_\_\_\_

Total items communicated this week (across all channels): \_

Liturgical week / season: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTENT TYPE	COUNT THIS WEEK
Spiritual	
Pastoral	
Operational	
Community	
Financial	
Other	

Any item of particular weight this week: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes on tone, rhythm, or register: \_\_\_\_\_

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WEEK 4

Date range: \_\_\_\_\_

Total items communicated this week (across all channels): \_

Liturgical week / season: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTENT TYPE	COUNT THIS WEEK
Spiritual	
Pastoral	
Operational	
Community	
Financial	
Other	

Any item of particular weight this week: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes on tone, rhythm, or register: \_\_\_\_\_

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*[If using an eight-week period, continue with Weeks 5-8 on an additional page, using the same grid.]*

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**PAGE 3: PATTERN ANALYSIS**

Now that the tally is complete, step back and look at the patterns.

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VOLUME PATTERNS

What is our typical weekly item count? \_

How much does it vary week to week? \_\_\_\_\_

**Did volume correspond to liturgical intensity?** (For example, was there more in Advent and Lent, less in Ordinary Time?) \_\_\_\_\_

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**CONTENT TYPE PATTERNS**

**Which of the five content kinds dominated?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Which was under-represented?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Did spiritual content rise in the high liturgical seasons?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Did operational content overwhelm other kinds?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**RHYTHM PATTERNS**

**Were there weeks where we communicated more than the reader could reasonably absorb?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Were there weeks where we could have communicated less?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Did our communications reflect what the Church was doing liturgically?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Were there moments of silence that served well?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Were there moments of noise that did not serve?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**STONE PATTERNS**

**Was the overall tone consistent across weeks, or did it vary?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Did sensitive matters receive appropriately careful treatment?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Were there communications we sent that, on reflection, should have been held back?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**PAGE 4: REFLECTION AND COMMITMENT**

Now the most important page. This is where the audit becomes useful.

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**THE HONEST QUESTION**

Were we inhaling or exhaling in our communications during this period? Did our communications match the liturgical breath, or fight it?

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**ONE THING TO STOP**

Based on this audit, name one thing we will commit to stop communicating, starting now. Just one. Something that has become habit rather than need. Something that takes up space in the weekly flow without serving readers.

**The thing we will stop:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why:** \_\_\_\_\_

**When we will stop it:** \_\_\_\_\_

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#### ONE THING TO START OR IMPROVE

Based on this audit, name one thing we will commit to start communicating better. Again, just one. Clarity and focus matter more than a long list.

**The thing we will improve:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How:** \_\_\_\_\_

**When:** \_\_\_\_\_

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#### THE NEXT AUDIT

The audit is most useful when repeated. Most parishes benefit from running this audit once a year, at the end of the liturgical year (late November), to inform planning for the coming year.

**Next audit date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Who will conduct it:** \_\_\_\_\_

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#### A CLOSING NOTE

If the audit has revealed patterns that are uncomfortable, that is a sign of its usefulness. Almost every parish that does this audit for the first time discovers something about its own rhythm it had not noticed.

The two things to watch for, specifically:

**Flat volume across seasons.** If you are communicating the same amount in Advent and in mid-Ordinary-Time, your communications are not breathing with the Church. The Liturgical Communications Calendar template (T2) is the planning tool that addresses this.

**Dominance of one content type.** If operational content is crowding out spiritual or pastoral, the parish's voice may be functionally clear but pastorally thin. Reweighting takes time. The Editorial Vetting Checklist (T4) and the Liturgical Calendar (T2) together help a curator hold the better balance over a full year.

If you are the parish secretary completing this audit, and the findings are heavier than you expected, the reflection guide *Ordinary Time Is Not Nothing* (R2) was written for exactly this moment. Ten minutes with it, slowly, may help.

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*Based on the True Light Digital Formation framework. For the cornerstone essay on which this audit is based, see [truelight.digital/formation/rhythm-and-restraint/](https://truelight.digital/formation/rhythm-and-restraint/).*

*True Light Digital publishes this worksheet as part of its free Formation library. If your parish would value support in building a wider communications system, please contact us at [sean@truelight.digital](mailto:sean@truelight.digital). If not, we hope this worksheet serves you well on its own. That is the goal.*

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