

CATHOLICS COME HOME CHICAGO

Summary Report - May 2010

The Catholics Come Home evangelization initiative was a collaborative effort among the Archdiocese of Chicago, and the Dioceses of Joliet and Rockford. At the center of this initiative was a media buy for 2,000 television ads that were viewed on 10 major networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, WGN, Fox, Cable, Telemundo, Univision, PolVision, PolSat) during the seasons of Advent and Christmas. The viewing area for the ads covered 20 counties across the entire northern part of Illinois. Cost of the media buy was shared by all three dioceses; Chicago was responsible for \$850,000 while Joliet and Rockford each contributed \$250,000. The funding for this initiative in the Archdiocese of Chicago came from donations and a bequest.

This Summary Report reflects the parish experience as reported in two surveys. We received 201 surveys from Pastors (57%) and 239 from the Parish Contacts (69%). The results from those 440 surveys provided the statistics for this report. Also included is data from the Office for Research and Planning who conducted a Mass Count in February 2010. The Office for Evangelization provided support and resources throughout the year in order to help parishes with the three phases of the initiative: Invitation, Welcome, Accompaniment.

Website

To provide a means of communication to all 357 parishes there was a new home page for Catholics Come Home Chicago (CCHC) embedded in the Office for Evangelization website. The first phase of this website informed the parishes about CCHC and offered downloadable documents. Later the site was revised to address the needs of returning Catholics. The site will remain active and change with evangelization initiatives in the future. Web hits on the CCHC site went from 613 the week before the ads began airing to 3,238 for one week during the airing of the ads.

Ministers of First Impression

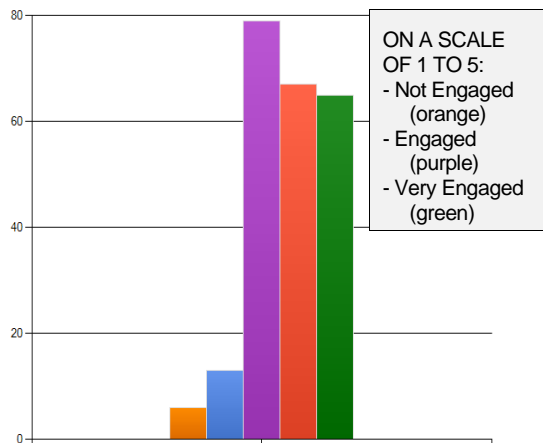
To prepare for the evangelization initiative, each parish was invited to send two receptionists or secretaries to a luncheon to honor them as "Ministers of First Impression." There were 660 who attended from 252 parishes. Many of those who attended the luncheons went on to train others (specifically student receptionists) in their parish.

"I learned how to be more resourceful and helpful to people coming to my parish."

- Parish Secretary -

Parish Contact Person

Each parish was encouraged to name an official Parish Contact who would receive and distribute materials and information on CCHC. Out of the 357 parishes in the Archdiocese, there were 320 active Parish Contacts. The Diaconate community was very supportive of the initiative and 120 of the Parish Contacts were Deacons. A training session for Parish Contacts was held at the Festival of Faith in October 2009, where they received a training manual, DVD of the TV ads, poster, buttons, brochures, prayer cards and a suggested timeline for evangelization activities in the parish and Archdiocese. Additional materials were posted on the CCHC website to support their evangelization efforts. Parish Contacts reported that over 90% of the parishes were positively engaged and enthusiastic in the planning process (see graph). *Continued next page...*



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO
Office For Evangelization
www.goingforth.org

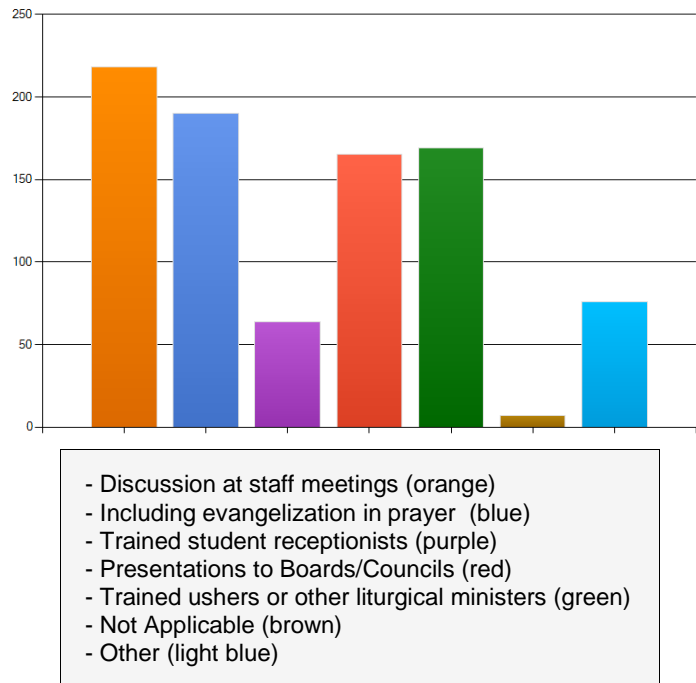


Parish Contact Person *continued*

The CCHC evangelization initiative powered the beginning of new actions and new behaviors in some parishes. Parishes found that the media “buzz” created by the TV ads provided a perfect opportunity to allow evangelization to leaven everything in parish life and ministry.

96% of parishes prepared for Catholics Come Home Chicago in ways that were suggested by the Office for Evangelization (see graph). Several parishes developed their own evangelization plans and added to the CCHC activities: 45 parishes sent out mailings, 24 published ads in local newspapers, and 24 parishes organized door-to-door campaigns to invite Catholics to “come home”.

The surveys showed that encouraging parishioners to offer personal invitations during the media event was an effective evangelization method.



“I have met at least four new parishioners who have come back and told me that they did see the ads on TV and came back to the Church because a friend in the parish invited them.”

- Pastor -

- Discussion at staff meetings (orange)
- Including evangelization in prayer (blue)
- Trained student receptionists (purple)
- Presentations to Boards/Councils (red)
- Trained ushers or other liturgical ministers (green)
- Not Applicable (brown)
- Other (light blue)

Accompaniment

RECONCILIATION

Immediately following the television ads the Office for Evangelization organized special opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, outside of the parish routine, on two dates for two hours each at 22 locations. Each location had at least two priests available who heard a total of 449 confessions.

The website offered visitors a “Guide to the Sacrament of Penance”. This was the most frequently downloaded document on the CCHC website.

“Many are returning to the sacraments after many years. I have heard some very prayerful and powerful confessions!”

- Pastor -

“A young man, who had been away from the Church for a long time heard the ads and began to think about changing the direction of his life.

He found out that we hear confessions on Saturdays and decided to attend. He had not been to Confession, much less church, for over 15 years. He was looking for a change in his life and needed guidance.

He is now part of our Men’s Spirituality group and attends mass regularly.”

- Pastor -

In November, every priest in the Archdiocese received a “Guide for Confessors”, written by Rev. Louis Cameli, to help prepare them to

hear confessions from people who have been away from the church.

52% of Pastors responding to the survey said there was an increase in the number of confessions.

38% said that there was a change in the quality of confessions.

“Several of the penitents had been away from the Sacrament and the church for many years, and so their confession reflected maturity and not necessarily “rote” sins, but sin that had affected them deeply over the years and they were now ready to release it into the hands of a loving God.”

- Pastor -

continued...

Accompaniment *continued*

HOMECOMING: CATHOLICS RENEWING THEIR FAITH

Parishes were encouraged to offer opportunities for catechesis and formation in the season of Lent for those who had returned to more active participation in the Church. To support them in this effort, the Office for Evangelization sponsored a catechetical series called HOMECOMING at 19 locations, reaching over 250 participants. The sessions covered:

- What does it mean to believe?*
- How do Catholics pray?*
- Why is Sunday Mass important?*
- Does faith help with the "tough stuff"?*
- How do Catholics live in the world?*
- Why is sexual morality and marriage so important in the Catholic Faith?*

February Count

To gain some sense of the immediate impact of the Catholics Come Home initiative, the Office for Research and Planning requested that parishes and missions take a special February count of Mass attendance. The count was done during the 3rd and 4th weekends in February, just after the start of the Lent. The results are an average of the two-week totals. These results are compared to October 2009 results and compare only those parishes that responded to the February count. Estimates are not made for non-respondents. While we are heartened by the increase at many parishes, we need to take into account that the data was collected during Lent, which typically sees an increase in Sunday

UNDERSTANDING ANNULMENT

20% of Pastors report that they saw an increased interest in Marriage validation. Returning Catholics with questions on marriage and annulment were encouraged to attend presentations by the Office for the Tribunal offered in 11 locations and 3 languages.

There were 288 participants, 138 of which took Tribunal Applications. The presentations covered:

- What is marriage in the Catholic Church?*
- What is the annulment process?*
- How does one apply for a declaration of nullity?*
- What are the civil effects of annulment?*
- What are some grounds used in a case?*

EVANGELIZATION EXPO

The 440 surveys submitted by Pastors and Parish Contacts held a wealth of information. An Evangelization Expo was created to share this information with parishes energized by the CCHC initiative. Parish Staffs attended to get new ideas as they planned for the following year. Two Expos were held in May 2010 and 50 parishes participated by sending over 100 people to learn how evangelization can become the central focus for the parish.

"The speakers seem to be on fire for the faith. All presentations were helpful, informative and full of good ideas. This is a "must see" event!"

- CCHC Parish Contact -

"I am energized by larger crowds in attendance at Mass, and I believe CCHC had that effect."

- Pastor -

Mass attendance. The best understanding of church attendance will be a comparison between October 2009 and October 2010 Mass Counts.

In the February Mass Count 269 out of 367 parishes/missions, or 73%, responded to this special request; 98 did not submit data. For those that reported, the count was 385,566.

The October 2009 count for those same 269 parish/missions was 356,640. This was an increase of 28,926 persons or 8.1%.

"I've been in the business for 20 years and know that I need to keep a big inventory of communion bread. In 2009, by Christmas I had to call for an early shipment or we would have run out. This is a sign that more people were coming to Mass."

- Cavanaugh Communion Bread Supplier -

Not only was there an increase in attendance, Pastors reported that the CCHC initiative had an effect on the quality of Liturgy in 35% of the parishes. 64% of the Pastors stated that their preaching changed due to the new people in the pews and the need to be more welcoming.

The Mass Count comparison from Oct 2008 and 2009 to Feb 2010 are:

OCT 2008*	OCT 2009*	FEB 2010*	Plus/Minus	Percent	Missing*
365,489	356,640	385,566	28,926	8.1%	98

*Totals are from only those parishes that submitted a February count in 2010

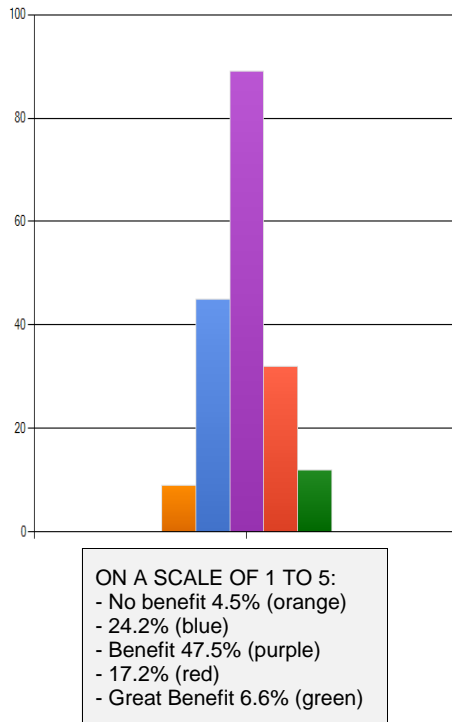
Pastor Survey

The Pastors' unique view of how CCHC shaped the spiritual health and Sacramental life of the parish was evident in the Pastor Survey results.

They reported new behaviors that highlighted evangelization in their parish: a focus on Catholic marriage, year-round RCIA, increased number of Baptisms, every ministry praying for evangelization, and listening evenings to begin a healing process for parishioners.

71% of Pastors reported that CCHC was a benefit to their parish (see graph), though there were different ways to define "benefit".

Some parishes saw an increase in newcomers and people registering as parishioners — those Catholics who had "come home". An additional benefit was the energy and excitement among parishioners, who felt pride in their faith and a deeper sense of Catholic identity due to the ads and the efforts in the parishes. A third benefit was that Parish Staffs were engaged and



enthusiastic about evangelization. They worked to improve many aspects of parish life: increased adult formation opportunities, improved quality of the bulletin, better communication within the staff, providing hospitality for newcomers.



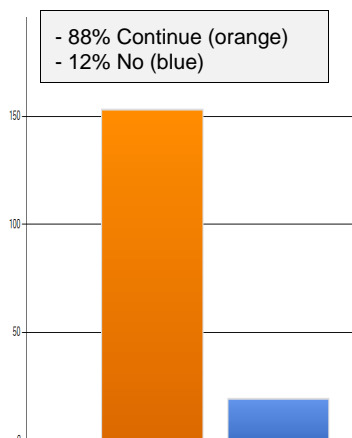
Pastors were also asked to write in the instances of hurt or anger that surfaced during the initiative. Of the 201 surveys, 41 Pastors remarked on conversations they had with people regarding topics including the sex abuse scandal, cost of the ads and doctrinal differences with the Church. 15% of the Pastors felt that these comments offered opportunity for them to address the issues and begin a period of healing for the individual.

"I received and talked with a few people who had been away from the church for many years. The opportunity to meet with them was a heartwarming and memorable experience. The Catholics Come Home initiative gave people the opportunity to come and talk to a priest."

- Pastor -

Evangelization In The Future

The CCHC evangelization initiative has strengthened and changed the imagination and pattern of behaviors in many parishes. 66% of the pastors suggested that the Archdiocese should use the CCH ads again and 88% of them recommend that we continue to use the media to evangelize in the future. (See graph.)



There has been a positive assessment of the impact of Catholics Come Home on parishes. Even at the diocesan level CCHC has seemed to make a significant difference. For example, the Annual Catholic Appeal collection always takes place during the same weekend within the Liturgical year. In 2010, announcements of the appeal and the collection took place immediately after the CCH TV ads concluded. This year there was a 52% increase in the 2010 collection from the previous year, with 1500 new donors.

With the encouragement from Pastor and Parish Contact surveys, there will be discussions with the Dioceses of Rockford and Joliet in Summer 2010 to plan for a similar evangelization effort that will be media-oriented to continue the momentum created by CCHC. The second phase will apply all that was learned this past year and it will be developed with an awareness of the success experiences in our parishes.

"We have to stay the course and move forward for an extended period of time...we are changing a culture and should continue to push the message."

- Pastor -