



Co-Workers in the Vineyard: Managing Our Churches During COVID-19

Friday, March 20, 2020

Pastoral Insights:

- Start with the list of home-bound parishioners that EMHCs usually visit and use that as a basis for check-ins
- CCD teachers can reach out to families of students to assess needs
- Be aware of food pantries that are unable to restock because of grocery store shortages
- Visit [TechSoup](#) as a resource for discounts on Zoom
- Catechists can use Zoom or other online systems to communicate with leaders, or for adult formation classes
- Zoom can also be used to host story time and snacks or a virtual lunch for children and their parents
- Consider creating virtual retreats to satisfy preparation requirements so that sacraments of initiation can be celebrated on smaller scale or independently
- Consider the current situation as an opportunity to reinforce the Domestic Church
- Update your parish website by adding a method for requesting or offering assistance.
For example: [St. Monica Parish in the Philadelphia suburbs](#). Notice the options in the drop-down menu on the left side, allowing people to offer support or ask for support.)

Financial Insights:

- Consider your message. Many are encountering financial difficulties because of the pandemic. It's okay to ask, but remember the needs and circumstances of those you ask; Pastoral needs should be addressed first
- Encourage online giving through email and social media. Offer mail-in options for checks
- Create a one-off giving page without requiring people to enroll in recurring payments

- Dioceses and parishes can consider establishing an emergency grant fund for parishes throughout your diocese, not for new initiatives, but to cover the current needs
- Defer or suspend the diocesan tax on parishes
- Encourage well-funded parishes to help struggling parishes; relaxing diocesan rules governing this
- Create special collections for specific causes such as paying parish employees or assisting parishioners in need
- Have an emergency finance council meeting if it hasn't happened yet

HR Insights:

- Some dioceses have guaranteed normal pay for hourly employees who are able to work remotely and recommended those that are not able to work from home to take administrative leave if they're not able
- Be sure to check local and state HR rules and regulations; consult a diocesan office or labor lawyer if possible
- Work with parishioners with expertise to create a network for transition services for those facing unemployment or reduced income; facilitate pairing of out-of-work parishioners with those who may be looking for employees
- Utilize parishioners' skills and provide opportunities for them to assist the parish, which they could use to enhance their resume

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