

# St. Monica Website Communications Brief

<http://www.stmonica.net>

## I. Project Overview

The St. Monica website needs major upgrading. Times have changed, and so have the tools we use to stay on top of the changes. We propose upgrades to the site that we think will help put the St. Monica Catholic Community in a good place to be amid all these changes, but at the same time reinforce what our vibrant, inclusive community is all about.

St. Monica's mission, *to form loving disciples who will transform the world*, plus what's now available in increasingly user-friendly Web technology, leads us to propose a complete overhaul of the current church / community website. The website will be rebuilt from scratch on the NetCommunity platform. In addition to refreshing look, feel, and navigation, the new site is intended to improve community interaction, increase the mobility and efficiencies of staff, volunteers and related ministries, and enrich everyone's visit.

Here are the details:

**Primary.** *The primary focus of this redesign is to strengthen community interaction and ministry through the web.* To do this, we will refresh the look and feel of the site, serve up information more effectively, offer a higher level of interaction (member and event registrations, online donations and payment processing, self-serve workflows for member info, volunteering, and subscriptions), offer spiritual content, and welcome new members in a targeted, hospitable manner.

**Secondary.** *The secondary focus of this redesign is to increase mobility and efficiency of workflows, by pushing information and processes to the web.* To do this, website maintenance will be decentralized, users will be able to control their own data related information and giving, and an intranet will be developed to offer internal staff users remote access to networked folders and information.

**Short-Term.** Short term goals include the following: redesigned look and feel; registration, event, and giving functionalities; paths for welcoming and integrating new members and users; audio homilies;

**Medium-Term.** Medium term goals include the following: members managing their own census and giving data; Ask a Priest feature; an intranet for internal users; decentralized web maintenance;

**Long-Term.** Long term goals include the following: text versions of homilies; offering video content; streaming a live Mass; more content like Ask a Priest; richer content goals;

## II. Audience Target Profiles

The following audience profiles are intended to encapsulate a wide variety of users visiting the St. Monica website. Primary audience members typically fall into three user types – tech savvy, utilitarians, and explorers – and four demographic types – young adults, families with children, distance members, and industry professionals. The following three profiles are a mixture of these various types.

### A. General members (might include Former members living abroad)

These are members who consider themselves members of the community already. They may participate in activities beyond mass, (or not) but they like to stay connected to the church and be able to get information about what's going on there from a functional/informational perspective, and as a touchpoint for their spiritual lives. Probably a fairly large group in terms of numbers.

*Net takeaway:* Ability to easily see the breadth of what is going at at SM, with key highlights, events, Monsignor's column (for instance) front and center, updated weekly/as appropriate.

### B. Families with children

This group is looking for easy to access information and registration. They are busy, use the website for fairly focused tasks (schedule updates) and would welcome paper and administrative clutter reduction that online registration and tracking will provide. In general, these people feel connected to the parish and are not as much in a "seeking" mode as other groups. Utilitarian needs.

*Net takeaway:* Functional, updated information that's easy to access. Online registration/tracking.

### C. People with specific spiritual needs

This group incorporates all of the "newcomers", seekers and participants in the Foundation Ministries and programs. While my research was in NO way comprehensive, in general the people I spoke to in these groups were looking for information, to be sure. More than that however, they are also seeking and would value a sense of community on the site. For those just investigating programs, they would be interested in things like testimonials, blogs, highlights of profiles of past and current participants. For those already involved in programs, such as RCIA or bereavement ministries, there was interest in forums or communities where they could share their experiences and stay connected with their peers in the programs. I think the same would hold true for some of the bigger events -- A testimonial or quotes from people who attended the Cornerstone Retreat last year, for instance, would be of interest to those considering attending.

*Net takeaway:* In addition to information, a window into the community and people who are in it.

Whether that's for a newcomer who is just thinking about where to go, to those with more targeted and specific needs, who would value hearing about or connecting with someone on a similar journey. Read a blog, testimonial, ask a question, read a quote, see a picture, watch a video from an attendee, etc.

### III. Perception, Tone, and Guidelines

This redesign project seeks to evoke feelings and perceptions of welcome, life, Catholicism, spirituality, timelessness, edge, strength, ease, care, and simplicity. It will achieve these objectives through a carefully crafted design concept that is vetted before staff and user test groups.

*Perceptive words:* welcoming, alive, vibrant, soothing, spiritual, Catholic, sacred, just, Eucharistic, contemporary, timeless, appealing, rooted, a little bit of edge / roughness / seams, relevant, caring, hospitable, humble, clean, simple, progressive.

Specific visual goals for this site will center on themes, images, and design choices related to community, welcome, ministry, and spiritual virtues. In terms of community, the people of the church are key (not structures), the artistic inspiration derived from our community art, the St. Monica Catholic Community logo, as well as the surroundings we find our community a part of (Santa Monica, coastal city, southern California, etc.). A spirit of welcome is one of the hallmarks of the St. Monica community, and should influence the overall ease of user experience. The compassion and work of our ministries recall the Sermon on the Mount, the spiritual virtues of the Beatitudes, and the actions that stem from them – to feed the poor, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, comfort those who mourn, etc., etc. These values provide commentary and ground for conceptual choices and direction.

#### IV. Communication Strategy

The overall message that St. Monica Catholic Community would like to convey to its visitors through the new website, is that ***St. Monica is a foundational, Catholic organization that engages lives in relationship with God***, through concrete, vibrant methods of worship, sacrament, prayer, ministry, community, information, volunteering, and formation, and does so in a manner that is welcoming, informative, just, inspiring, caring, and of service.

This message will be achieved through refined visual imagery that draws inspiration from the people of our community, the traditions and art of our Catholic faith, the needs of the people and causes we serve, and the beautiful surroundings of the coastal city of Santa Monica. It will be achieved through intuitive, simple navigation that guides users along easy pathways. It will be achieved through content that is engaging, informative, challenging, interactive, and up-to-date. And it will be achieved by being a relevant source of help and service for those in need.

The success of this message will be measured through user feedback methods, user interaction, logins, sign-ups, and registrations, online giving, and analytics.

## **V. Competitive Positioning**

In comparison to other Catholic churches, St. Monica stands as a living, breathing, vibrant, welcoming, progressive, pastoral community. St. Monica creates dynamic, Catholic liturgies, both in preaching and in music, that help people to contemplate and find their God. St. Monica is an excellent source of formation and education, both in religious formation programs for adults and youth, as well as excellent elementary and high school programs. St. Monica is a significant ministerial force for social justice and pastoral care. And finally, St. Monica is a place of fellowship and community, for groups of all ages.

What sets St. Monica apart from other churches and organizations is that it does not settle or stand still, but marches forward with excitement, creativity, courage, and crackle in the journey of life.

## **VI. Single-Minded Message**

Word of Life.

## VII. Assumptions

**a.) Scope.** The scope of this development entails a complete overhaul of the St. Monica website, which is comprised of approximately 200 pages. This project will include conceptual development, design and layout, production, programming in Dreamweaver and NetCommunity, the relaunch of the St. Monica website, and the implementation of content and maintenance strategies. In later phases of this project, the scope will include an intranet and richer media offerings.

**b.) Structure & Hierarchy.** The structure and hierarchy for the site will be site-mapped according to best practices, following the parameters set by the bounds of the NetCommunity CMS, and will aim for a shallow / flat directory structure, while avoiding folders within folders, in order to achieve desirable, friendly URLs.

**c.) Content.** Content will be mined from the existing website, provided by staff, and written by the development team as necessary. Ongoing content provision and strategies are TBD.

**d.) Production.** This site will be built on the NetCommunity platform. The production of the site includes an initial phase of research, site-mapping and wire-framing, design of look and feel – graphically and CSS, content plan, programming, development of NetCommunity parts, testing, backend deployment procedures to be executed by Blackbaud Interactive for launch, and a maintenance plan. Coding shall follow the latest standards for XHTML and CSS, there will be some light JavaScript, and 2-3 Flash objects for photo slideshows and audio delivery, which will likely entail some ActionScript. Privileged users will be able to maintain website pages through the CMS. The site will comply with web standards established by the World Wide Web Consortium, and Section 508 Accessibility standards wherever possible. The site will be hosted on remote servers at Blackbaud. The site will be developed for cross platform use on the following browsers: IE6, IE7, IE8, Firefox, and Safari. Analytics are a feature offered through NetCommunity.

**e.) Time Period.** The Phase 1 development cycle is projected to occur during the 4th quarter of 2009 and 1st quarter of 2010, with a launch of the new website slated for late 1st quarter 2010 (March 31, 2010). Phase 2 development, which includes the development of Intranet features, will occur during the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2010. Phase 3 development, which includes richer media content, could happen earlier in 2010, but for now, we will slate it in 4th quarter of 2010.