Catholics Come Home Savannah Summary Report

INTRODUCTION

In Advent 2010, the Diocese of Savannah in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Atlanta partnered with Roswell, Georgia-based Catholics Come Home, Inc., a nonprofit lay Catholic organization, on a television initiative to invite inactive Catholics to return to the faith.

Between December 17, 2010 and January 23, 2011, almost 5000 commercials aired in English and Spanish throughout the Diocese of Savannah. Ads were seen on major broadcast and cable stations South Georgia including stations in Savannah, Macon, Augusta, Albany and Columbus and additionally on cable systems in outlying areas.

These included 4300 English-language commercials and 500 Spanish ads along with 548 Spanish language commercials on radio. The cost to the Diocese of Savannah was \$160,000.

"Catholics Come Home brought a new essential awareness both in our priests and our people that we should be about the task of evangelizing and most especially to invite back those who are not presently at the banquet table. The projection of Catholics Come Home is a long term focus.

We must keep on extending the hand of welcome not just today and tomorrow but it should become part of all of our journeys to be aware of those who have left and to make every effort to bring them home." -Bishop J. Kevin Boland



PREPARATIONS

1. Bishop J. Kevin Boland and staff members conducted **7 workshops** for "Ministers of First Impressions" in the seven deaneries of the Diocese and one for diocesan staff to prepare to welcome returning Catholics. Almost **700** parish leaders, including **42 priests** participated.

2. To complement the *TV commercials*, **150 DVDs** of the ads, **35,000 brochures** in *Spanish and English*, **100 car magnets**, **3,000 prayer cards** in *Spanish and English* and about **700 handbooks** on Catholics Come Home were distributed to parish leaders. The brochures included inserts for each of the seven deaneries with a listing of contact information for the parishes in each deanery.

3. A total of **26,600 postcards** were sent to homes in the diocese to promote the 2010 Catholic Communication Campaign collection. The half of the collection that stays in the diocese funded workshops and other preparations for the launch of Catholics Come Home.

4. *A special Web site* was created: www.cch.diosav.org with a twofold purpose: to give suggestions to parishes on how to invite nonpracticing Catholics home and to invite formerly active Catholics to return. The site included welcome back videos from Bishop Boland in Spanish and English and a link to the Catholics Come Home Web site www.catholicscomehome.org.

5. NEWS RELEASES were sent to the secular media in the diocese. The diocesan newspaper, the *Southern Cross*, published articles and ads promoting Catholics Come Home, including a center spread on the initiative. The *Savannah Morning News*, *The Augusta Chronicle*, WTOC-TV, Fox News and others published/aired stories.

6. The 2010 Bishop's Annual Appeal, which included funding for Catholics Come Home, collected almost **\$2.5** million. In October 2010, *letters* were sent to **4063 families** in the diocese who had not given to the Bishop's Annual Appeal explaining the Catholics Come Home initiative and asking if they would like to support the initiative. A total of **\$15,000** was given. In December a letter was sent to **3997 families** who gave to the BAA telling them of the pending launch of the TV commercials. Gifts in response to this letter totaled **\$10,500**.



A survey was sent to pastors, Parochial Vicars, and Catholics Come Home Coordinators in March 2011.

Survey Results – Overview

- 34 surveys returned
- 20 parishes represented
- 4 did not identify parish
- 5 parishes had multiple respondents
 - o 5 respondents from Cathedral of John the Baptist
 - o 4 respondents from Thomasville/St. Augustine
 - o 2 respondents from Douglas
 - o 2 respondents from Holy Spirit Macon
- 16 of the respondents who identified themselves were pastors or parochial vicars

General Impressions

Viewing frequency

- 10 saw the commercials more than 5 times
- 9 saw the commercials 2 to 5 times
- 8 saw the commercials at least once
- 7 never saw the commercials
 - o Of this number 2 said they do not watch TV, but saw the DVD

Commercial Message

- 25 strongly likes the content/message
- 3 liked the content/message
- 2 were neutral about the content/message

The overall message of "Come Home"

- 24 thought it was communicated very well
- 5 responded "somewhat"
- 1 responded "not clearly"

Parish Preparation for Catholics Come Home

- 31 said their parish prepared for CCH
 - o 26 used bulletin announcements
 - o 27 used announcements from the pulpit
 - o 20 used a welcome table
 - o One parish added 8 weeks of newspaper ads
 - o 5 used banners
 - o Others said website, newsletter, prayer at Mass
 - o 1 did nothing special



Office of Communications

"I received very positive comments from active parishioners as well as from members of the Macon community. The TV spots were very informative and placed our Church and faith in a very positive light. We have had two individuals return to church after being away 20-25 years. ..." Father Mike Ingram, pastor of Holy Spirit Parish, Macon, Georgia



Survey Report - Continued

Formal Program for those returning

- 10 are planning a program or classes including
- o Matt Kelly's book "Rediscovering Catholicism"
- o Diocesan Booklet
- o Deacon's class
- o RCIA
- 21 are not implementing any programs or classes

Observations from CCH campaign

- o Increase in Mass attendance
 - o 7 said Yes
 - o 8 said no
 - o 19 were unsure
- o Increase in confessions
 - o 5 said yes
 - o 14 said no
 - o 15 were unsure
- o Increase in inquiries about Catholic marriage/annulments
 - o 5 said yes
 - o 12 said No
 - o 17 were unsure

o An increase in people contacting the parish about returning to the Church

- o 13 said yes
- o 18 said no
- o 3 were unsure
- o Increase in attendance at current Faith Formation classes
 - o 3 said yes
 - o 17 said no
 - o 14 were unsure
- o New or expanded evangelization programs directed to those who are returning
 - o 8 said yes
 - o 12 said no
 - o 14 were unsure
- o Was CCH a benefit to your parish
 - o 4 chose "Great Benefit"
 - o 20 chose "Benefit"
 - o 10 chose "No Benefit"



"The preparation session at the deanery level was perhaps the most positive part of the whole process for us. The day brought a sense of hope for the Church and our ability to move out of the past with its hurts and into the future." Father Bob Poandl, pastor of St. Christopher Church, Claxton, Georgia.

- o Should the diocese use CCH ads again
 - o 21 said yes
 - o 12 said no

o 1 was unsure

Those who marked "no" added the following comments:

- o Been there, done it, move on
- o Very expensive
- o Need deeper, more fundamental evangelization
- o May be helpful to other congregations, did nothing for ours
- o We've done it, it is costly
- o Did not see any benefit
- o Further use of time and effort on CCH may better be spent on adult faith formation
- o Wonderful to do yearly, but the ads are too expensive
- o Our region did not see commercials

Parish Impact

The CCH campaign created a sense of pride in my parishioners

- o 21 said yes
- o 2 said no
- o 10 were unsure

My parishioners are excited about evangelization because of CCH

- o 9 said yes
- o 3 said no
- o 21 were unsure
- My parish is more welcoming as a result of CCH
- o 18 said yes
- o 3 said no
- o 12 were unsure
- My parish has been*
- o 12 said very engaged in CCH
- o 17 said somewhat engaged in CCH
- o 4 said not engaged in CCH
- One respondent did not fill out this portion of the survey

"I attended Catholic school through the eighth grade. When I married a man who was not Catholic, he pulled me away from the church. We later divorced. The Catholics Come Home ads were reassuring. They make you feel like you were missed. I decided to come back home to my roots." Tina Provost, recently returned Catholic to Holy Cross Parish in Pembroke, Georgia.



General Comments

- I found the excitement generated within the CCH committee and the subsequent presence of a welcoming table, engaged ushers, and parishioners praying the CCH prayer quite heartening.
- We put a lot of heart and effort into this campaign.
- We did everything the diocese asked us to do.
- I think the program was very good. I thought the diocese would have been more direct or explicit in requiring parishes to take specific steps to make the program a success. My sense is that everyone was waiting for specific instructions as to what to do, offer, etc. The ads were great!!
- Even though I personally never saw the commercials on the channels I watch, I did think they were all very good. As a result of CCH we implemented several welcoming strategies we are using today.
- We have a new committee starting now to get ready for the year.
- I would like to use this space to mention that following the CCH media campaign my parish conducted a survey to ask local Catholics what they would like to have in terms of the local Catholic community. It addressed wants and needs in terms of the present and future. We are still gathering results, but it is our hope that non-practicing Catholics will notice the advertisement and understand that our parish is interested in their input.
- I like the effort on the part of the diocese. The commercials were awesome and we will continue to find new ways to use them.
- My family and I watched tried to find a commercial I never saw one. I have only heard of 2 people in our parish who say they saw one commercial. (Thomasville)
- I received very positive comments from active parishioners as well as from members of the Macon community. The TV spots were very informative and placed our Church and faith in a very positive light. We have had two individuals return to church after being away 20-25 years. We have a single mom with 3 daughters who seem to be a little more apprehensive about returning. We are doing all we can to make them feel welcome and loved.
- It's hard to determine of any lapsed Catholics are returning. A few new faces, but were from out of town.
- I have seen more strangers at Mass, but other than that we have had no added interest.
- The preparation session at the deanery level was perhaps the most positive part of the whole process for us. The day bought a sense of hope for the Church and our ability to move out of the past with its hurts and into the future.
- I would have liked to see more spots on our church today- some spots highlighted the church of 50 years ago.



"The messages of Welcome Home Catholics hit direct to my heart. I know that without the faith and support of priests and other individuals at our church family at St. Anne's I would be terribly lost... I find that we have neighbors not practicing the faith and I am communicating with them regarding the beliefs and love of God. They are also interested in attending Mass more often." Beverly Gorden, parishioner of St. Anne's in Richmond Hill, Georgia.

"...A Lutheran pastor raved about our Catholics Come Home campaign in his sermon to the congregation! He held it up as a positive example and what a good effort it is." Arlene Distel, Catholics Come Home Coordinator at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Savannah

"We were so pleased that 19 people came to our first Welcome Home session at Sacred Heart! I pray all parishes have a similar response." Katharine M. Dugas (Katee) Sacred Heart Parish, Warner Robins

"I definitely think the commercials made a big difference, in the turnout for the Catholics Returning Home program. They are a very effective method in reaching out. This is the second year the parish has offered the Catholics Returning Home program. Last year before the Catholics Come Home initiative began in the Diocese of Savannah the turnout ranged from 12 in the fall and 7 at Easter. This year not only returning Catholics signed up for the program, but some non-Catholics who had seen the ads came also." Anne Pacosa, Director of Development, Sacred Heart Parish, Warner Robins

"We have 10 participants in our Awakening Faith session and all have seen the commercials. Three said they came because of the commercials and five others said the commercial and bulletin announcements. Two were told by friends. They all were impressed by the commercials and felt they were being called back to their Catholic Faith. Two of the participants have started going to Mass, one went to confession." Jim Zilaro, Catholics Come Home Team Leader, St. Joseph's, Macon



"Following is a comment from my Ingleside Baptist Church friend, Barbara Moore: 'I saw the commercial for this on TV and I was so warmed by it that if I were a fallen away Catholic, I would be returning as quick as possible. That commercial made ME feel so good!'" Kelley R. Stewart

Asset Recovery MidSouth Community FCU

"A parishioner from St. Anne Church, Columbus said she first saw the commercials while visiting in Atlanta last year and they inspired her to return to the Church on Ash Wednesday 2010. 'I have been attending Mass and preaching the word of God to everyone I know since then. Thanks. It is nice to be back home.'"

"Recently, I sat down to have dinner with 8 parishioners who were reconciled to the Church because of our Catholic Come Home Campaign. It was the "graduation" event of a wonderful program that Deacon Ken Maleck led to help these parishioners on their journey back to our faith community. Also present at the meal were those Catholics who through their friendship supported the returning Catholics on their journey home. I felt blessed to be part of this special and joyful gathering. What surprised me was that the commercials as good as they were, only had a great impact on a couple of the Catholics who were returning. The big influence on most was the loving outreach from their friends, family, and co-workers. The Campaign along with its powerful commercials had given these practicing Catholics the courage and inspiration to reach out and share the love of Christ with those in their lives who no longer felt close to His Church. One individual had been away from the Church for over fifty years. All of them felt they had found a very warm and loving faith community that welcomed them home. This is evangelization at its best." Father Gerry Ragan, pastor of St. Mary on the Hill Parish in Augusta, the largest parish in the diocese.



Pew Count- Taken on two weekends in February as a follow-up to the annual October pew count.

Par	ishes reporting pew counts	October 2010	February 2011	Difference	% Difference
	paha, St. Ann	69	81	12	17.39
	ericus, St. Mary	282	355	73	25.89
	nbridge, St. Joseph	230	273	43	18.70
	kely, Holy Family	24	42	18	75.00
	nilla, St. John Vianney	114	136	22	19.30
	dele, St. Theresa	262	180	(82)	(31.30)
	hbert, St. Luke	12	9	(82)	
					(25.00)
	nalsonville, Incarnation	28	33	5	17.86
	ultrie, Immaculate Conception	414	514	100	24.15
	on, Our Divine Saviour	458	445	(13)	(2.84)
11 St		1,266	1,229	(37)	(2.92)
	Mary on the Hill	3,436	2,961	(475)	(13.82)
	y Family	738	784	46	6.23
14 St. /	Anne	1,595	1,919	324	20.31
15 St. I	Benedict the Moor	111	99	(12)	(10.81)
16 Pine	e Mountain, Christ the King	315	353	38	12.06
17 Dub	blin, Immaculate Conception	247	257	10	4.05
18 Eas	stman, St. Mark	104	129	25	24.04
	t Valley, St. Juliana	317	368	51	16.09
	hleen, St. Patrick	655	680	25	3.82
	con, Holy Spirit	337	330	(7)	(2.08)
	con, St. Peter Claver	564	619	55	9.75
	Rae, Holy Redeemer	55	58	3	5.45
	ndersville, St. William	29	37	8	27.59
	rner Robins, Sacred Heart	1,669	1,674	5	0.30
<u> </u>		579	545	(34)	
	Ventworth, Our Lady Of Lourdes				(5.87)
	hmond Hill, St. Anne	1,039	1,466	427	41.10
	ssed Sacrament	673	765	92	13.67
29 Cat		1,341	1,494	153	11.41
	surrection	311	305	(6)	(1.93)
31 St. I	Benedict the Moor	277	287	10	3.61
32 St. I	Frances Cabrini	570	628	58	10.18
33 Sts.	. Peter & Paul	401	421	20	4.99
34 Spri	ingfield, St. Boniface	422	404	(18)	(4.27)
35 Tyb	ee Island, St. Michael	266	321	55	20.68
36 Alm	na, St. Raymond	52	50	(2)	(3.85)
37 Bax	dey, St. Rose of Lima	256	191	(65)	(25.39)
38 Clax	xton, St. Christopher	176	167	(9)	(5.11)
39 Haz	zlehurst, Good Shepherd	207	158	(49)	(23.67)
	tter, Holy Family	210	94	(116)	(55.24)
	en, St. Bernadette	38	42	4	10.53
	nbroke, Holy Cross	79	80	1	10.55
<u> </u>	ndhill, Our Lady of Guadalupe	201	203	2	1.27
	vania. OLO Assumption	62	60	(2)	(3.23)
- ,		-			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
	nswick, St. Francis Xavier	829	690	(139)	(16.77)
	ien, Nativity of Our Lady	123	150	27	21.95
	uglas, St. Paul	457	471	14	3.06
	gerald, St. William	212	222	10	4.72
	kston, St. Francis of Assisi	92	93	1	1.09
50 Hine	esville, St. Stephen	449	474	25	5.57
	up, St. Joseph	172	191	19	11.05
52 St. \$	Simons Island, St. William	865	1,039	174	20.12
53 Wa	ycross, St. Joseph	350	378	28	8.00
54 Will	acoochee, Holy Family	56	65	9	16.07
Colu	umn Totals	24,096	25,019	923	303.92
\square					
Nur	mber of Parishes reporting in February:		54		
			%	People	<u> </u>
Δνο	erage increase in parishes reporting		5.63%	17 17	
	ual overall increase		0.00%	923	
ACL	uar overall increase		0.00%	923	L



Office of Communications

May 2011