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New archdiocesan Web site includes The Record on-line

Glenn Rutherford

Record Assistant Editor

Site also provides information on parishes, schools, and archdiocesan agencies and services

The Record, August 4, 2005 - The Archdiocese of Louisville has launched its redesigned site on the World Wide Web, and for the first time it includes an electronic version of The Record.

The new site -- www.archlou.org -- was designed by ACS Technologies of Florence, S.C., and came to life a couple of weeks ago. Lori Massey, director of the Office of Information Systems for the archdiocese, said the new archdiocesan Web page represents a dramatic technological leap forward.

"It gives us an opportunity to do a lot of things we couldn't do with the old one," she said in an interview last week.

For instance, the new Web site has the capability of offering forms that can be used to register for various archdiocesan agency programs. "In the future you'll be able to use those forms to submit information for The Record's bridal section, for instance," Massey said. "I anticipate that some of the agencies will really make use of this capability."

The new site also provides all manner of information about the archdiocese -- information on parishes and schools and on archdiocesan departments and services. There's also a link to "Catholic Connection" for people who want to return to the church.

It has a "navigation bar" that is always present at the top of the page, and that bar has "drop-down menus" that allow visitors to quickly see the types of information available in each section.

"The site is an evolutionary process," Massey noted, "and while we have a lot on it and out there already, we'll be expanding it intensely as we're working on it."

The availability of The Record on-line is one of the new site's major attributes, she added.

"People have been asking for that forever, it seems," she said. "And now, because of the outstanding work of our staff and of ACS, it's come to pass."

Each week the site will display The Record's front page articles and a variety of other regular features -- editorials; columnists, including Father J. Ronald Knott; obituaries; and the Around the Archdiocese section and Bulletin Board, the paper's calendar of events.

The site also includes television listings through a link to Channel 19.

At present, about 30 percent of each issue of The Record will be available on-line, said Massey. "As the site

evolves, that percentage will increase," she said. "We'll also have the capability to add an archive function for (Record editor) Joe Duerr's editorials, for Briefings (the archdiocese's monthly newsletter), and for some other documents and publications."

Massey said she's already heard feedback from Internet users who've found the new Web site to be "one of the most up-to-date sites out there."

"It was a long time coming for us, and we were overdue to improve the site," she said. "But now it's done, and it was done really well. This site will take us quite a distance into the future before we have to upgrade it again."

One of the things that she hopes to add to the site fairly quickly, Massey said, is maps to parishes and schools. "We'd like to have a link on the parish listings to a map of where the parish is," she said, "and we'd like to provide the same information for schools."

As each archdiocesan agency begins to provide information for the site, Massey said, it will continue to expand.

"I imagine that agencies such as OLFE (the Office of Lifelong Formation and Education) will make quite extensive use of it," she added.

Massey said that when the archdiocese decided to have the Web site redesigned, it was determined that the site needed to be, in the computer language of today, very "user-friendly."

"We wanted to make sure that nobody had to fight to find what they were looking for," she said. "We wanted it to be easy to use, and we had many, many lengthy meetings to decide on the wording to use on the site in order to accomplish this."

ACS Technologies accomplished the task in about a month and a half, Massey explained, and what they've helped produce -- along with the archdiocesan information systems staff -- will "compete with any Web product in existence," she said.

"I've had someone who is a Web site developer look at our site and say, 'They've given you everything you need,'" Massey said. "We're very, very pleased with the product. A lot of people worked very hard to bring this about in a very short time."



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