

Bringing the Faith to the People

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Los Angeles

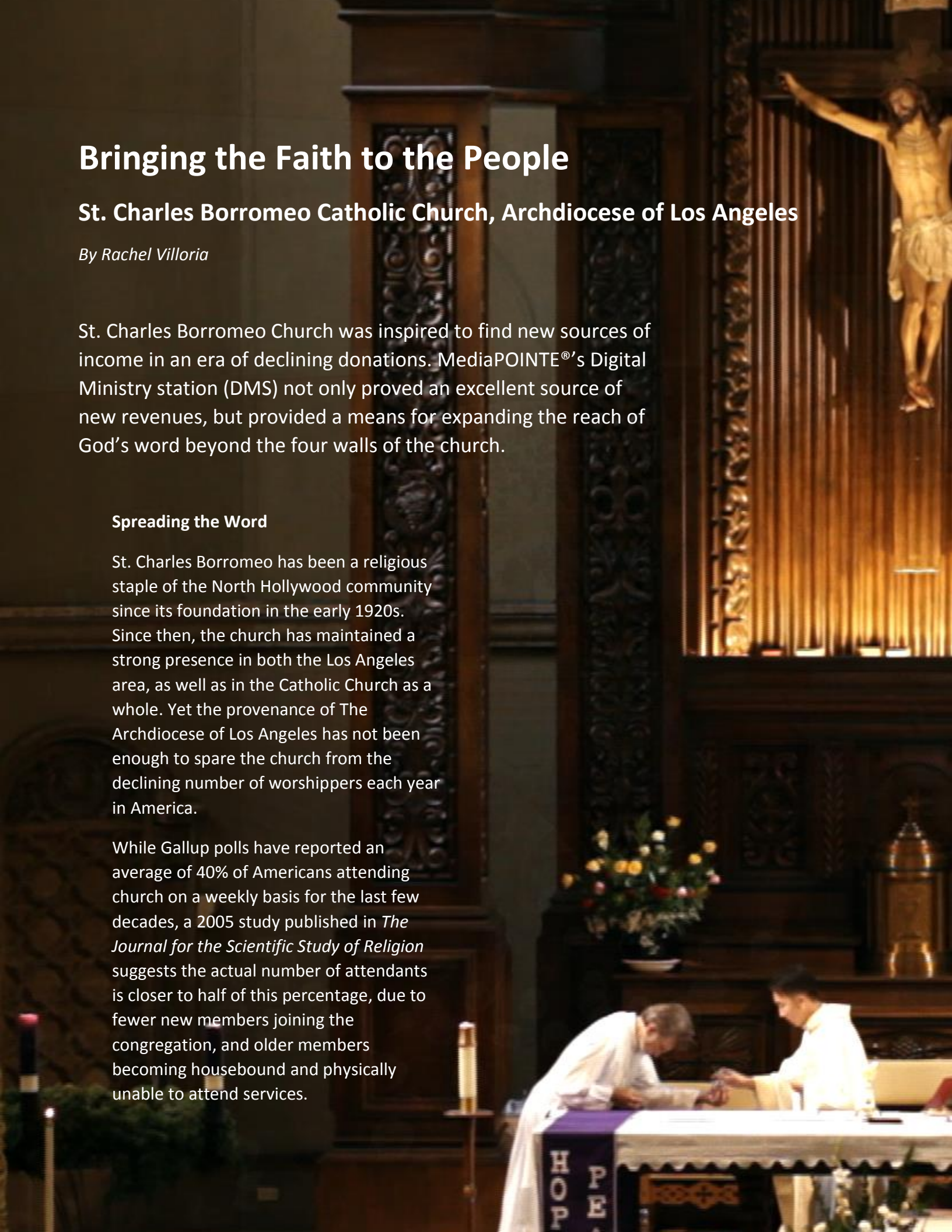
By Rachel Villoria

St. Charles Borromeo Church was inspired to find new sources of income in an era of declining donations. MediaPOINTE®'s Digital Ministry station (DMS) not only proved an excellent source of new revenues, but provided a means for expanding the reach of God's word beyond the four walls of the church.

Spreading the Word

St. Charles Borromeo has been a religious staple of the North Hollywood community since its foundation in the early 1920s. Since then, the church has maintained a strong presence in both the Los Angeles area, as well as in the Catholic Church as a whole. Yet the provenance of The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has not been enough to spare the church from the declining number of worshippers each year in America.

While Gallup polls have reported an average of 40% of Americans attending church on a weekly basis for the last few decades, a 2005 study published in *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* suggests the actual number of attendants is closer to half of this percentage, due to fewer new members joining the congregation, and older members becoming housebound and physically unable to attend services.



Church leader, Monsignor Robert J. Gallagher, has not lost faith in the power and importance of Catholicism in the modern day. Rather than shun technology, the Monsignor has embraced it, stating that not to do so “would be a terrible mistake.” Gallagher maintains that, “Using technology to further God’s word is natural, and a resource not to be ignored.” As contemporary culture has become increasingly visual, it is only logical that the church becomes more visual as well.

A local audio visual provider installed a MediaPOINTE® DMS (Digital Ministry Station) system at St. Charles Borromeo to capture everything from daily services to special events. The DMS generates much needed income for the Church and helps increase membership by promoting church services and bringing services back to those who are no longer able to attend.

Seeing is Believing


MediaPOINTE®’s DMS has allowed St. Charles Borromeo’s services to be automatically recorded and streamed to the internet. This allows those unable to attend in person to view the services online. At the same time, the DMS produces professional quality DVDs, with title screens and packaging custom branded for the church, all with just a click of a button.

The DMS has endless possibilities. It allows for people both in and outside of the church to see normal services, as well as DVDs of special occasions, that can be made and then sold for profit,” states Monsignor Gallagher.

The DMS is a cost-effective solution to increase revenue for houses of worship of all faiths. St. Charles Borromeo sets the prices for DVDs at whatever level it feels appropriate for a given event. This enabled the system to pay for itself after the recording of just a few special events, such as their children’s Christmas play and holiday choral performances. All profits from DVD sales go directly back into the church.

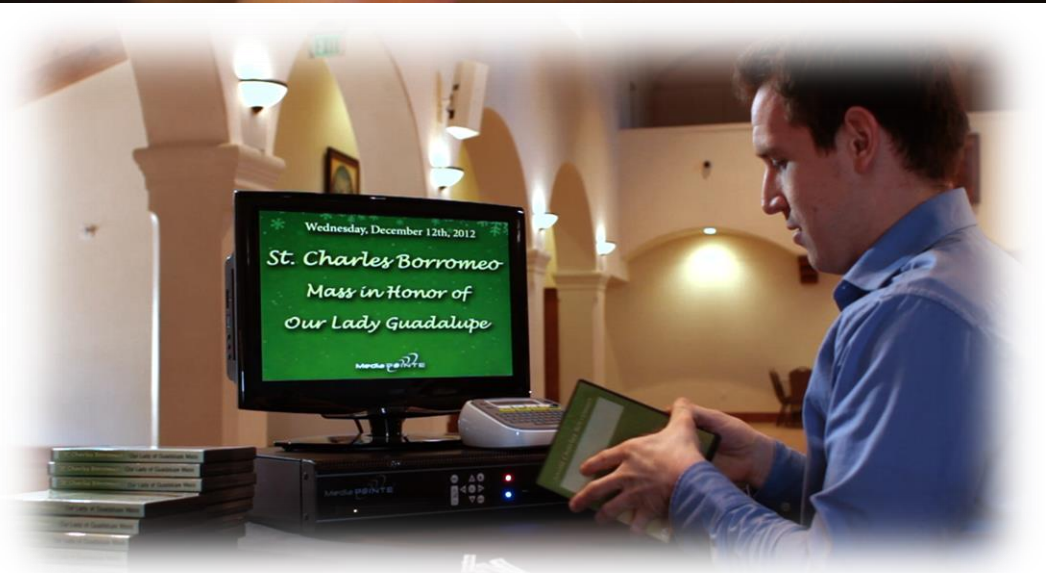
Gallagher encourages other parishes, even in poorer communities to leverage such technology, stressing that, “Even in parishes that are poor, people will set aside funds in order to get a DVD of their children in the Christmas Pageant.”





“Recording special moments that take place only once in a lifetime give people the opportunity to remember, hold onto, and share with those who were unable to be present,” adds Gallagher.

These funds help to build the church and its community, while the DVDs preserve memorable experiences for its members. The Monsignor points out that the DMS has applications beyond the everyday, and even the annual parish events. “The DMS can also be used to record celebrations of life and death, such as funerals and marriage ceremonies,” noted Gallagher.



Perhaps the greatest value of MediaPOINTE®’s DMS to St. Charles Borromeo is its ability to bring people back to the church itself. Gallagher states, “The MediaPOINTE® DMS is a wonderful way to attract people to Christianity, to Catholicism. By allowing people to see the services online or on a DVD, the services become attractive enough to bring people physically back to the parish.” A phenomenon Monsignor Gallagher describes as, “a seeing is believing kind of thing...seeing, and then being a part of it.”