

The Quiet Roam (QR) Church Tour

The growth of computer technology and the increasing use of mobile devices offer a variety of opportunities for evangelization, formation and worship. Consequently, catechetical ministers need to continuously update and improve their knowledge and skills in this area in order to reach modern Catholics of all ages.

While the Catholic Church is truly universal, extending to every corner of the world, the parish church is where most Catholics experience the sacraments, serve their neighbor and grow in one's faith. Parish leaders, pastors and lay, are wise to recognize the importance of these emerging technologies and seek to incorporate these into their parish whenever possible. Large print missals, adaptive hearing devices and improved access for the disabled may be seen in churches of every denomination throughout our country. As technology moves forward we will be seeing more churches with WiFi access and pastors encouraging their congregants to utilize technology when appropriate.

Much has been written since Vatican II on the construction and design of churches and worship spaces. Church buildings often reflect ethnicity of the parish population, incorporate natural resources found locally and call to mind the patron saint and his or her country of origin. The parish of St. Martin dePorres in Poughkeepsie, New York was formed in 1962 and a more [detailed parish history](#) may be found at the [St. Martin dePorres parish website](#). The present church building was dedicated in May of 1998, contemporary in design and similar in appearance to that of Latin American churches.

My area of responsibility for the Archdiocese of New York is serving as a resource for pastors and catechetical leaders in Dutchess and Ulster counties. While I have been in virtually every church in these two areas, I felt St. Martin dePorres would lend itself to the marriage of technology and evangelization. The stained glass windows, in particular, are what I chose to focus upon, for the most part, for the Quiet Roam (QR) Church Tour.

There were three major steps involved in the design and execution of the virtual tour:

First, I visited the church and took photographs of the stained glass windows. Photographs were also taken of various furnishings (e.g., baptismal font, ambo, altar, and tabernacle) for inclusion in the project, either now or in the future.

Second, a website needed to be designed. The website, ["Quiet Roam \(QR\) Church Tour,"](#) was created using Wix.com. The website would have an introductory page in addition to the pages on which would be found the photographs of the church and accompanying narratives. The narratives would consist of descriptions, biographies, or citations from Sacred Scripture or the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

This was, perhaps, the most time consuming step in the process. Rather than direct to another website, upon which the QR codes would depend, the decision was made to construct brief biographies for each saint depicted in the windows. For the church furnishings and for some of the windows, passages from Sacred Scripture or citations from the Catechism of the Catholic Church were chosen. After ensuring that website design was correct and consistent on mobile devices, the next step would pull it all together.

Third, QR codes were generated using an online code generator, [Create your QR code for free.](#) When scanned, the QR code, which is inconspicuously situated near the appropriate window or church furnishing, would display a photograph and the accompanying narrative. The QR codes found in the virtual tour appear at the end of this article.

The question has been posed, “Does a tree falling in the forest make a noise if no one is there to hear it?” So the fourth, final and ongoing phase of this project is developing various ways to inform parishioners and visitors this tool is available for their use. These may include any or all of the following:

- Signage to be placed at the church entrances, informing visitors that a church tour is available for those with a mobile device and QR code reader;
- Placing notices in the weekly bulletin;
- Placing a notice or icon on the parish website;
- Reminding visitors to the parish’s Facebook page that this tour is available;
- The development of lesson plans and activities for use by children in the parish school and religious education program;
- Publish the QR codes on their own, in an attractive handout or booklet, which can be shared with those who are homebound or live out of town and wish to maintain contact with the parish.

As we look to the future, other church furnishings may be added to this tour in order to create a more enriching and complete experience. While the focus and purpose of our worship is Jesus Christ, the technological tools we have at our disposal to spread the message of the Gospel has never been greater. I encourage catechetical ministers to learn as much as possible about new technology, maintain that knowledge and, perhaps most important of all, don’t be afraid to share the Good News with those God has put before you.

Linda Fitzsimmons
Regional Catechetical Director, Dutchess and Ulster Counties
Archdiocese of New York

QR codes found in the virtual tour are:

The Vestibule



The Altar



The Ambo



The Tabernacle



The Sanctuary Windows



The Nativity Window & Ambry



St. Peter



St. Paul



South American Saints #1



South American Saints #2 (center)



South American Saints #3



North American Saints #1



North American Saints #2 (center)



North American Saints #3

