

Summary Statement of Parish Questionnaire

November 2003

99% of 373 respondents said that they do experience St. Jerome's as a welcoming and hospitable place when they come to Mass. Five respondents did not, citing "unfriendly" and "depends on who you are."

The 395 respondents who rated the Masses for being spiritually uplifting replied in the very good to excellent range. The 6 PM and 9:15 AM liturgies were highest rated, the 5 PM, 8 AM, and 10:30 AM Masses were rated next as very good. The 11 AM Mass was also rated very good, yet was not rated as highly as the other Masses.

The 391 respondents who rated the Masses for music found the 6 PM excellent, next the 9:15 AM as near excellent. The 8 AM, the 10:30 AM, and the 11 AM Masses were very good, and the 5 PM Mass was very good to average, and was not rated as highly as the music at the other Masses.

Of those responding the question about improvements to St. Jerome's 40% (98 respondents) favored a new foyer, 26% (64) said a new meeting hall, 22% (55) for a new multi-purpose building, and 12% (29) for extra classrooms. 84% of respondents (152) said they would support the improvements financially.

Regarding other activities at St. Jerome's, the TOTAL teen program received very good to excellent responses, closely followed by religious education. "Other Liturgies" were rated as very good. Social Activities rated better than average, but clearly did not rate as highly.

143 respondents (59%) would not be interested in a parish retreat and 100 (41%) were interested. Of those interested 56% preferred an off-premises retreat and 61% preferred a weekend to a week day. 13% (17) replied they would be interested in being a member of the RCIA team (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults).

The general demographics of the 395 respondents showed 36% were age 60+, 32% were 45-59, 27% 30-44, and 5% 18-29. 77% are married, 11% single, and 10% widowed. 90% (332 respondents) attended Mass weekly, 6% daily, 2% monthly, and 2% Christmas/Easter or rarely. 61% of respondents (213) have been parishioners for 10+ years, 21% for 4-10 years, 10% for 1-3 years, and 8% for less than one year.

In the open responses to the questions about the Masses being spiritually uplifting, and about the music at Mass, respondents often replied with compliments. Many suggestions for improvement seemed to show we need to explain better the various types of Masses and music schemes.

In the open-ended questions, the first concerned how can the parish help parishioners to further their own formation as adult Catholics. There were many compliments and several suggestions:

- Masses that include diversity issues
- The priests should visit for a meal with parishioners on a rotating basis.
- more lectures and classes convenient to working people
- an adult Emmaus
- Bible study discussion
- Keep RENEW or something like it going each week.

Suggestions for “what can we do to help you be more active” included:

- Inform me more of what is available and what is going on regularly separate from the bulletin
- more social events
- Tell us where we are needed.

The needs and/or social injustices that the people of St Jerome should address again included several compliments, cited a number of areas where St. Jerome’s is active and suggested some new areas:

- mistreatment, abuse of children
- poverty, violence, death penalty
- battered women and children
- child abuse, homeless, the hungry
- hunger, shelter, elderly, grief counseling
- drug abuse by teens and young adults
- elder care.

On the issue of reaching out to people who have never experienced, or have lost interest in, the Catholic Church, respondents said:

- more gatherings for young adults 18 and up
- an open house welcome once a month
- a "Bring a friend to church" day
- open house, social events
- Research what other parishes nationwide do to attract young unmarried adults. Find a Judy Dennehy for these young unmarried adults.
- special invite-day mailing.

Parish activities respondents would like to see / participate in, included some that have been tried or are ongoing. This question and the next often cite social activities and might be related to the previous lower rating given to social activities at the parish.

- dances, dinners, outreach programs for a day
- family picnics, Sunday coffee after mass
- more adult social activities
- a fun run/walk to raise money
- novenas to the saints, devotions, processions
- repeat the funeral mass planning workshop – daytime if possible
- On-going education classes on theology and the essence of the church – what can be changed and what cannot. It might bridge the gap between groups within the parish.

Regarding what can be done to meet the special needs of our parishioners, respondents voiced numerous compliments and suggested:

- more social events like festival and car raffle, monthly coffee Sundays
- senior citizens association/singles club
- more meetings between elderly and children.
- more activities for young unmarried adults.

To improve parish communications respondents suggested an improved website, more publicity for the website, and a monthly newsletter mailed to parishioners.