

## St. Suburban Survey Report

This survey is designed to assess three aspects of parish life:

- Performance in key areas of parish ministry
- Performance in three goals of Catholic evangelization
- Level of parishioner engagement

The findings provide a snapshot of the views of parishioners. The report allows for comparison between the opinions of parish leaders and those of the congregation overall. This report highlights variances between those populations.

The general profile of the survey population suggests a somewhat traditional worshipping community that is considered most successful by older parishioners. Young people are less involved and feel less ownership for the parish. Overall the congregation expressed a more positive impression of parish performance than the leaders. Respondents are spiritually committed people who express a trusting and compassionate style of faith but who do not give as high a priority to prayer in their personal lives despite their general satisfaction with Sunday worship and devotional opportunities.

A comparison of the overall ratings of parish performance suggests a significant differential between the two populations surveyed – leaders vs. average parishioners. The perception of the leaders seems both less optimistic and more differentiated than that of the general congregation. This could suggest greater awareness on the part of parish leaders or simply a lack of communication between the two groups. This will be up to the leadership team to determine (perhaps through interviews or focus groups)

There is evidence for uncertainty about how to share faith with others beyond Sunday worship. The congregation is struggling to understand its role in the lives of younger people and young families.

Results suggest some key areas of attention for parish vitality as well as some easy fixes. Among the ongoing challenge for the parish will likely be attention to the following:

- engaging parishioners in decision making
- outreach to young adults
- faith formation resources for young families

- social concerns education and action
- encouraging community through service opportunities, small group faith sharing and social events

Relatively easy fixes might include: installing assistive listening devices, providing access to buildings for people with disabilities. Broaden participation in leadership roles to include young adults, and people who are differently-abled. Encourage greater parishioner participation in decision making through participation on pastoral council, and various suggestion box or occasional family meeting opportunities where parish issues can be openly discussed.

The lack of cooperative efforts with other churches or ecumenical dialogue and lack of opportunities to share Catholic faith can lead to congregational timidity. Millennials and the iGeneration admire faith communities that are willing to enter into honest and charitable dialogue. Such initiatives will be likely to fuel inquiry in joining the church which can revitalize the catechumenate.

Note: Individual comments have little particular value for the intentions of this survey though the items that were given approval as most important or least important are also quite validating in significance.

## AREAS OF PARISH LIFE

Leaders	Parishioners	Areas of Parish Life
2.31	2.33	Liturgy
<b>1.79</b>	2.21	<b>Outreach, Justice and Service</b>
<b>1.65</b>	2.25	<b>Inclusion of People with Disabilities</b>
<b>2.10</b>	2.36	<b>Stewardship</b>
<b>1.70</b>	2.40	<b>Faith Formation</b>
<b>1.85</b>	2.10	<b>Community</b>
<b>1.82</b>	<b>2.11</b>	<b>Youth</b>

(less than 2.0 suggests a negative perception - .25 or greater is a significant differential between survey populations)

## CATHOLIC EVANGELIZATION

Some would suggest that the Catholic Church is a victim of its own success. The faith of the home has driven high church participation for over a century. In the current situation, family faith practice is faltering. Because the church can no longer presume to grow from births and immigration alone, there is growing interest in evangelization and parishioner engagement.

**Goal I: To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others.** At the table of the Lord, we are nourished by our faith and commissioned to bear Good News in our families, in our workplaces and in the broader community. Still, we know that no one is fully converted, so the Church supports us each and every day in the conversion of our own lives - in mind, heart and will. Catholic evangelization starts with revitalizing the faithful who are already gathered.

**Goal II: To invite all people in the United States, whatever their social or cultural background, to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ so they may come to join us in the fullness of the Catholic faith.** Catholics experience Christ as their source of hope through a rich tradition of word, sacrament, and witness of saints and martyrs. In this, there is boundless cause for enthusiasm and no reason to be shy. All Catholics are capable of being messengers of Good News (Romans 10:14-15) and we should always be ready to give an accounting for the hope that we have in Christ Jesus (1 Peter 3:15). It is our great commission to be messengers of the Good News (Mt. 28: 16-20). In sharing faith, we grow in faith.

**Goal III: To foster gospel values in our society, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of the family, and the common good of our society, so that our nation may continue to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ.** Catholics are called to a mission in the world. We are co-workers in the vineyard as members of Christ's body. Compassion moves us to respond to the needs of others and work on behalf of justice. This is constitutive to the work of evangelization and it is the most credible witness that we can give to the transformative power of the Gospel.

Leaders	Parishioners	Aspects of Catholic Evangelization
2.15	2.33	Goal 1: Revitalizing the Faithful
<b>1.92</b>	2.15	<b>Goal 2: Invite Others to Join the Catholic Church</b>
<b>1.86</b>	2.23	<b>Goal 3: Transform the World</b>

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## PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT - Moving People from Being Merely Involved to Fully Engaged

Successful churches do not confuse involvement with engagement. Some members are involved but not positively energized by their church. This can be a problem because most often people feel it before they believe it. People don't show up at worship services because they want to know more about God. They come wanting to have an encounter with God. Many evangelical and nondenominational churches are winning over former Catholics by engaging them without ever discussing any theological differences. For most people engagement is clarified by the answers to four basic questions:

Leader Parishioner

2.20 2.18 *What will I get?*

- I know what is expected of me
- My spiritual needs are met

1.74 2.12 *What can I give?*

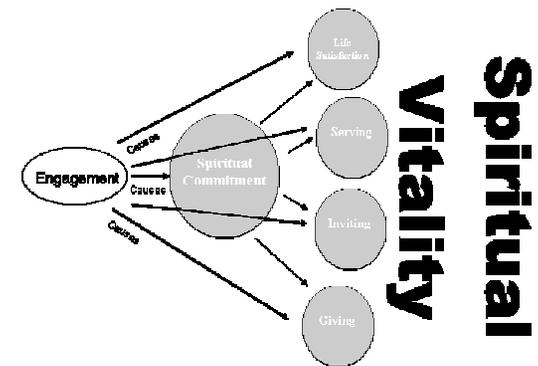
- I have the opportunity to do what I do best
- I received recent recognition
- Leaders care about me as a person
- Someone encourages my spiritual development

1.75 2.03 *Do I belong?*

- My opinions seem to count
- The mission makes me feel that my contribution is important
- Others in my congregation are committed to spiritual growth
- Aside from family, I have best friends in this parish

1.85 2.25 *Can we grow from each other?*

- Someone has talked with me (past 6 mo.) about my spiritual growth
- I have opportunities to learn and grow in this church



These totals suggest a congregation that is involved but not engaged. Again, it seems that the expectations of parishioners are lower than those of parish leaders.

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## St. Suburban - Parish Leader Responses

Score Item

- 2.92 Our parish values good music in weekend worship and other celebrations
- 2.83 The scriptures are well proclaimed at weekend liturgies
- 2.72 People are encouraged to discover the presence of God in everyday life
- 2.67 Devotional opportunities (e.g. rosaries, stations, adoration) are offered in this parish
- 2.67 Opportunities exist for pondering the meaning of God's Word in one's life
- 2.55 The pastor seems overworked
- 2.66 Our parish welcomes all people and seeks out those who may feel less accepted (3)
- 2.55 Our parish encourages us to care for people in need and work on behalf of justice (3)
- 2.50 Children, youth and couples are well-prepared for the sacraments
- 2.50 Parish identifies and invites inactive Catholics to participate in various activities (4)
- 2.44 The parish celebrates diversity, confronts discrimination and encourages tolerance (3)
- 2.36 The church has a website that is attractive and useful (resources, information, etc.)
- 2.33 Our parish knows that it has a mission beyond the walls of the church
- 2.33 Signs of care and concern are abundant in this community
- 2.27 Our parish addresses issues of conscience and social justice
- 2.27 Young people are in visible leadership roles in the church
- 2.25 Parish facilities are kept clean and well-maintained
- 2.22 Our parish encourages vocations to ministry in all its forms (3)
- 2.18 Sacramental preparation involves the entire family
- 2.18 Our parish does a good job inviting, preparing and recognizing volunteers
- 2.17 Households are provided materials to grow in faith at home
- 2.17 Parishioners share personal faith experiences and what it means to be Catholic
  
- 1.91 Our parish offers opportunities for on-going faith formation across the life span**
- 1.90 People with disabilities use their gifts in various ministries at weekend liturgy**
- 1.89 Parents are supported in their role as teachers of our faith (3)**
- 1.86 Couples are prepared and supported for married life (5)**
- 1.81 Young people are actively encouraged to participate in parish ministries (5)**
- 1.62 Young families receive spiritual resources and practical support (4)**
- 1.64 Our parish participates in activities with other churches and religions**
- 1.64 Our parish works with other churches to care for people in need**
- 1.64 Parishioners learn about Catholic social teaching**

- 1.64 Assistive hearing devices are available and offered to anyone in need
- 1.64 Young adults (18-35 years old) serve in visible leadership roles in this parish
- 1.57 Young people (12-18 years old) are given opportunities to serve in the community
- 1.56 Adults are encouraged to explore the various doctrines of the church (3)
- 1.50 Parishioners are equipped to critically evaluate the media in light of Christian values
- 1.50 Parents receive adequate preparation for the sacraments
- 1.50 Our parish is engaged in public discourse regarding social issues (3)
- 1.50 The sound at worship is clear and audible from all locations in church
- 1.45 Young people are encouraged to worship in age appropriate ways
- 1.33 Parish leaders encourage interfaith dialogue (6)
- 1.27 Mission trips and service programs are sponsored throughout the year
- 1.19 Our facility has accessible parking, entrance and bathrooms for people with disabilities
- 1.18 The parish shares in ecumenical dialogues and cooperative work in the community
- 1.00 The parish has an active catechumenate

## St. Suburban - Parishioner Responses

Score	Item
2.48	Devotional opportunities (e.g. rosary, stations, adoration) are offered in this parish
2.41	This parish encourages us to care for people in need and work on behalf of justice
2.40	I connect with God in a meaningful way through worship
2.34	The parish promotes stewardship of time, talent and treasure
2.33	Someone in this parish encourages my spiritual development
2.35	I have opportunities to learn and grow in my faith at this parish
2.34	I enjoy attending Mass each weekend
2.31	Parents are supported in their role as teachers of the faith
2.30	This church supports full-time caregivers - young, elderly, disabled or sick
2.28	Young people are prepared for the sacraments
2.28	Leader(s) of the parish care about me as a person (2.2/2.2/2.5/1.9/2.5/2.4)
2.28	Families are provided materials to grow in faith at home
2.28	The parish celebrates diversity, confronts discrimination and encourages tolerance
2.26	After Mass each weekend I have a better sense of how to live my faith each day
2.25	The parish helps me experience God's presence in the daily activities of life
2.25	The homily is almost always relevant and uplifting
2.25	I have confidence about how money is spent at this church
2.23	Young people are given opportunities to serve in the community
2.23	The parish works with other churches to care for people in need
2.23	This parish welcomes all people and seeks out those who may feel less accepted
2.21	I am supported in my ministry at this church
2.20	I feel a sense of belonging and caring in this community
2.16	Young people feel welcomed at our church
2.13	I feel a responsibility to support our parish financially (1.5/1.9...)
2.10	The parish is engaged in public discourse regarding social issues
2.06	My opinion is valued at this church
<b>1.98</b>	<b>I have been invited to take a leadership role in the parish</b>
<b>1.97</b>	<b>I use my talents in meaningful ways at church (1.7/2.4/1.9/1.8/1.9/2.1)</b>
<b>1.96</b>	<b>I have been invited to participate in a small faith sharing group (1.8/1.8...)</b>