

2018 STM PARISH SURVEY – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In April and May 2018, a focus group was formed under the direction of Parish Pastoral Council to identify broad areas of parish life and then to determine questions that could be asked of the Parishioners that would provide feedback on the areas that were identified by the focus group to help provide direction for a Parish Strategic Plan.

Between June and July 2018, St. Thomas More (STM) Parish provided this survey both online and on paper to the congregation.

The survey was organized into the following sections:

Spiritual	Feedback/opinions regarding the liturgical and spiritual life at STM
Community	Feedback/opinions regarding the sense of community at STM
Operations	Feedback/opinions regarding the physical facilities and operations at STM
Demographics	Demographic details regarding the respondent

The results were captured in an online tool, Google Forms, of which there were **499 total survey responses** approximately half submitted using each method (i.e. both paper and online responses).

Feedback Results

Quantitative Results

Based on the ratio of generally dissatisfied responses, the table below shows where the most dissatisfaction was expressed:

Spiritual	Operational	Community
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Availability of settimes for confession2. Meeting spiritual needs of special groups3. Scheduling of weekday Masses	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Other parish fundraising2. Maintenance of the parking lot3. Communication in general and more specifically as to parish finances	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Welcoming new parishioners (Q7)2. Building a stronger sense of community3. Community outreach

Qualitative Results

Within the 499 survey responses, approximately 2100 comments were captured, which included both positive and negative statements, and suggestions for solutions to expressed concerns. The responses were read and categorized based on key words in the comments.

The parishioner comments covered a broad spectrum of topics, where the following list elaborates on the diversity of feedback provided. **Note** – the list below is not exhaustive, but has been provided only to illustrate the diversity of parishioner comments provided.

Examples illustrating diversity in topics provided in parishioner comments:

- Desire for further attention to seniors' needs/programs
- Requests for building changes and infrastructure upkeep – examples:

- More meeting spaces required
- update sound system
- introduce projection system in the Nave
- Parking problem concerns
- Conflicting comments regarding recitation of the Rosary before Mass:
 - Environment doesn't protect the sanctity of Rosary
 - Need to remove practice of reciting the Rosary prior to Masses and have it conducted in personal circumstances (e.g. at home)
- Both praise and requests for changes or evolution of the music ministry
- Requests to invest in parish youth for long-term faith retention:
 - create volunteer activities/opportunities involving youth to apply the faith
 - requests for Improved Catholic education:
 - collaboration with the Catholic School Board
 - in the Mass
- Improve/evolve welcoming parishioners:
 - Registering/welcoming new parishioners so they can become involved and become part of, and contribute to the parish community
 - Greeting all attendees upon entering the Church at Mass
- Concerns about financial transparency for parish finances
- Conflicting requests for Mass changes
 - Announcements – have before Mass, remove from Mass, more announcements, fewer announcements
 - Baptisms / First Communion – distribute amongst more Masses; limited to special Masses only (e.g. one special Mass per month)

As illustrated in the example list above, parishioner opinions were often conflicting regarding certain topics.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is general satisfaction with parish, however many comments and suggestions provide a basis for improvements in numerous areas.

Based on analysis of the survey feedback, the following are the top five concerns which will be given priority attention in the immediate short term:

1. Addressing Mass-time parking issues
2. Investing in parish youth
3. Welcoming/registering new parishioners and informing them of parish service offerings and ministry opportunities
4. Improving financial transparency of parish financial situation
5. Communication improvements, both within and outside the Mass, for all aspects of the parish, including events/activities, services, ministries, finances, etc.

Additional priorities will be included in the long-term 5 year strategic plan which will be provided later in the current calendar year.

The detailed results from this survey can be found on the Parish Website <https://stm.caedm.ca/> . Parish Council welcomes your suggestions and comments on the results.