

Results of the Immaculate Conception Church Parishioner Survey

December 2009

Introduction

This report presents a summary of the results from the Immaculate Conception Church (ICC) parishioner survey. The purpose of the survey was to solicit input from parishioners about what they see as strengths and weaknesses of the programs offered at the parish and ask for ideas on how aspects of the parish could be improved. The information will be used to help develop a long range plan for the parish.

Methodology

In October 2009, Immaculate Conception Parish Surveys were available to parishioners at all Masses. The survey was developed by Father Mirek of ICC. Parishioners were encouraged to complete an anonymous survey and return it to the church. In all, 85 surveys were returned. There are currently about 300 registered families at ICC. This means that approximately 28% of parishioners completed a survey, and results may not be representative of the church as a whole. Nevertheless, results are still helpful in identifying areas the people of ICC enjoy as well as areas parishioners see as needing improvement.

Responses to most of the survey questions have been summarized and appear in tables 1 through 7. Table 1 is a summary of who completed the survey. Table 2 summarizes responses about attendance at Mass. Tables 3 through 7 summarize the sections from the survey having to do with the Liturgy, Religious Education, Social/Community Activities, Ministry/Service, and Evangelization/Welcoming. Each of these main topics of the survey had open-ended questions for parishioners to respond to as well, such as what they liked most or least, and what ideas parishioners might have for improving these aspects of ICC. Written comments have been transcribed and appear in Appendix A.

Who Completed the Survey?

Several items from the survey asked for information about the parishioner such as age group, gender, marital status, work status, and number of children living at home. The majority of parishioners (72%) indicated they were completing a survey for themselves, while 27%, or 23 parishioners, indicated they were completing the survey on behalf of their entire family.

Table 1 summarizes the demographics of the 85 parishioners who completed a survey.

Demographics of Parishioners Who Completed a Survey
Table 1

Gender			Marital Status		
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Male	30	35%	Married	64	75%
Female	48	57%	Single	8	9%
Did not Indicate	7	8%	Widowed	5	6%
Total	85	100%	Divorced	5	6%
			Did not indicate	3	4%
			Total	85	100%

Age				Years with the Parish		
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Under 18		2	2%	1-5	12	14%
18-24		0	0	6-10	11	13%
25-34		6	7%	11-15	9	11%
35-44		8	9%	16-20	8	9%
45-54		18	21%	21-25	7	8%
55-64		24	28%	26-30	12	14%
65-74		15	18%	31+	24	28%
75 and older		9	11%	Did not indicate	2	2%
Did not indicate		3	4%	Total	85	100%
Total		85	100%			
Number of Children Living at Home				Work Status		
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Children Under 18	0 children	59	69%	Full time	43	51%
	1 child	6	7%	Part time	13	15%
	2 children	7	8%	Unemployed	4	5%
	3 children	6	7%	Retired	23	27%
	4 children	2	2%	No response	2	2%
	5 children	2	2%	Total	85	100%
	No response	3	4%			
	Total	85	100%			
Children Over 18	0 children	64	75%			
	1 child	13	15%			
	2 children	7	8%			
	No response	1	1%			
Total	85	100%				

Attendance at Mass

The survey asked whether the responder is registered as a parishioner at Immaculate Conception. A large majority (81%) indicated they are registered at ICC, while 13 people (15%) indicated they are not registered at ICC. Table 2 presents results from a question that asked how frequently parishioners attend mass. Fifty-five respondents, or 65%, say they attend mass once a week, and 27% say they attend more than once a week.

Table 2

Attendance at Mass

How Often Do You Attend Mass?		
	Number	Percent
More than once a week	23	27%
Once a week	55	65%
1-3 times per month	7	8%
Less than once per month	0	0%
Did not indicate	0	0%
Total	85	100%

Parish Communications: Website and Bulletin

When asked whether they have access to the Internet, 97% indicated they did have Internet access. However, just 51% indicated they had visited the parish website. Nearly all respondents, 97%, say they read the Parish bulletin.

Liturgy/Mass

The next section of the survey asked questions about the Liturgy (Mass). Parishioners were asked to read a number of statements regarding the Liturgy/Mass and indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Results appear in Table 3 on the following page. A majority of people (89%) who completed a survey agree that worship services are uplifting and inspirational. About 75% say they feel comfortable inviting a non-parishioner to Mass. Some parishioners strongly felt the homilies are relevant and meaningful, but there was variation in opinions regarding this topic, as seen in the table. These results indicate it largely depends on who is leading the worship/Mass.

Table 3

Results from Statements Regarding the Liturgy (Mass) at ICC

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply to me
Our worship services are uplifting and inspirational.		36 (42%)	40 (47%)	3 (4%)	0	6 (7%)
I feel comfortable inviting a non-parishioner (such as a friend or family member) to attend Mass.		33 (39%)	42 (49%)	5 (6%)	0	5 (6%)
The homilies are relevant and meaningful to my life (in general).	Leader 1 Leader 2 Leader 3 Leader 4	58 (68%) 17 (20%) 15 (18%) 14 (17%)	23 (27%) 33 (39%) 41 (48%) 36 (42%)	2 (2%) 9 (11%) 6 (7%) 3 (4%)	1 (1%) 5 (6%) 2 (2%) 3 (4%)	1 (1%) 21 (25%) 21 (25%) 29 (34%)
Music played during Mass enhances the worship experience.	Sat. 5:30 pm Sun. 7:30 am Sun. 9:15 am Sun. 11 am	15 (18%) 9 (11%) 9 (11%) 12 (14%)	21 (25%) 22 (26%) 20 (24%) 24 (28%)	3 (4%) 2 (2%) 4 (5%) 4 (5%)	1 (1%) 0 1 (1%) 1 (1%)	45 (53%) 52 (61%) 51 (60%) 44 (52%)
The weekend Masses are held at convenient times.		43 (51%)	33 (39%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	6 (7%)

Regarding the music, parishioners answered mostly based upon the Mass they normally attend, as seen in the large numbers who indicated the question "Did not apply to me." For example, looking at results in Table 3 for the statement "Music played during Mass enhances the worship experience" 36 (43%) agree, and 45 parishioners (53%) could not give a rating because they do not attend Saturday evening service. Most parishioners (89%) agree that weekend Masses are held at convenient times.

Comments regarding the Liturgy/Mass that parishioners wrote on their surveys have been transcribed and appear on pages 3 through 10 in Appendix A.

Religious Education

The next survey topic asked about religious education at ICC. Religious education includes programs offered for children, for adults, involvement of youth in the liturgy, and how well ICC provides current information to parishioners regarding religious education. Results from those questions appear in Table 4. Responses to the open-ended questions, such as what parishioners like most, least, and ideas for how religious education could be improved, can be found on pages 12 to 19 in Appendix A.

About 40% of those who took a survey indicated they are satisfied with religious programs offered to children, 10% are not satisfied and 49% indicated the statement does not apply to them. More parishioners indicate they are satisfied with religious education for adults (65%), although 26% are not satisfied and 27% say the statement does not apply to them.

Table 4
Results from Statements Regarding Religious Education at ICC

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply to me
I am satisfied with the types of religious programs offered for children.	6 (7%)	28 (33%)	8 (9%)	1 (1%)	42 (49%)
I am satisfied with the religious education programs offered for adults.	20 (24%)	35 (41%)	7 (8%)	0	23 (27%)
I am satisfied with the sacramental preparation programs offered at the Parish.	12 (14%)	33 (39%)	6 (7%)	0	34 (40%)
The religious education staff is responsive to the needs of parishioners.	11 (13%)	37 (44%)	8 (9%)	3 (4%)	26 (31%)
The Parish involves youth and young adults in liturgy, ministries, and parish activities.	10 (12%)	43 (51%)	6 (7%)	2 (2%)	24 (28%)
The Parish provides current information about religious education programs to parishioners and to the community.	18 (21%)	53 (62%)	1 (1%)	0	13 (15%)

Still looking at results in Table 4, it appears most people who participated in the survey (53%) are generally satisfied with sacramental preparation offered at the Parish, although 40% indicated this topic did not apply to them. Of the 59 parishioners who rated the statement regarding "The religious education staff is responsive to the needs of parishioners" 48 agreed with the statement and 11 did not agree.

About 62% of survey respondents agree that the Parish involves youth and young adults in liturgy, ministries, and parish activities. Nine percent disagree and 28% indicate the statement did not apply to them. A large majority (84%) agree that the Parish provides current information about religious education programs to parishioners and to the community.

Social/Community Activities

Table 5 summarizes results from the survey regarding social/community activities. Comments about what parishioners like most, least, and ideas for social/community activities at ICC can be found on pages 19 through 25 in Appendix A.

Table 5
Summary of Results About Social/Community Activities

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply to me
The Parish offers a good balance of social/community activities and programs for everyone.	24 (28%)	42 (49%)	8 (9%)	1 (1%)	10 (12%)
Parishioners are encouraged and invited to become involved in Parish social/community activities.	36 (42%)	31 (37%)	9 (11%)	2 (2%)	7 (8%)
Parish social/community events are advertised effectively to the community.	23 (27%)	44 (52%)	9 (11%)	0	9 (11%)
I volunteer regularly at Parish social/community events.	7 (8%)	34 (40%)	17 (20%)	2 (2%)	25 (29%)
I regularly attend Parish sponsored social/community events.	11 (13%)	36 (42%)	16 (19%)	1 (1%)	21 (25%)
There is a strong sense of community among parishioners.	21 (25%)	38 (45%)	17 (20%)	1 (1%)	8 (9%)

Results in Table 5 regarding the social/community activities indicate a majority of parishioners are satisfied with activities being offered. About 77% agreed with the statement "The Parish offers a good balance of social/community activities and programs for everyone" and 79% agreed with the statements that "Parishioners are encouraged and invited to become involved in Parish social/ community activities" and that "Parish social/community events are advertised effectively to the community."

Fewer parishioners indicate they attend Parish sponsored events (55%) or regularly volunteer at the events (48%). Regarding a strong sense of community among parishioners, 70% of those who took a survey agreed that there is, while 21% disagreed with the statement.

Ministry/Service

The survey asked parishioners to respond to several statements regarding ministry and service at ICC. Results appear in Table 6. Comments from the open-ended questions about what is liked most, least, and ideas about ministry and service can be found on pages 26 through 30 in Appendix A.

Table 6
Summary of Results for Questions About Ministry/Service

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply to me
Parishioners are encouraged to become involved in various ministries.	27 (31%)	43 (51%)	7 (8%)	0	8 (9%)
The Parish effectively communicates information about the various ministries.	20 (24%)	43 (51%)	11 (13%)	1 (1%)	10 (12%)
The Parish provides training in the various ministries.	18 (21%)	47 (55%)	3 (4%)	0	17 (20%)
I am satisfied with the ministry programs provided at the Parish.	20 (24%)	39 (46%)	10 (12%)	0	16 (19%)
The Pastor is accessible and responsive	43 (51%)	28 (33%)	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	8 (9%)
The Parish staff is accessible and responsive.	43 (51%)	28 (33%)	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	8 (9%)
I have opportunities to give input to parish policies, programs and direction.	25 (29%)	40 (47%)	2 (2%)	3 (4%)	15 (18%)

Results in Table 6 indicate most parishioners (75% or more) agree that parishioners are encouraged to become involved in various ministries, the Parish effectively communicates information about the various ministries, and the Parish

provides training in the various ministries. Most also indicate satisfaction with the ministry programs provided at ICC (70%), agree that the staff is accessible and responsive (84%), and believe there are opportunities to give input to parish policies, programs, and direction (76%). However, there are those who disagree with some of the statements and others who do not see ministry/service as applying to them.

Evangelization/Welcoming

The final section of the survey asked parishioners to agree or disagree with statements regarding evangelization and welcoming. Results appear in Table 7. Ideas from parishioners regarding evangelization and welcoming can be found in pages 30 through 32 in Appendix A.

Table 7
Summary of Results for Questions About Evangelization/Welcoming

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply to me
I (my family) feel welcome at the Parish.	48 (57%)	33 (39%)	3 (4%)	0	1 (1%)
The Parish offers opportunities for parishioners to reach out/welcome the wider community.	29 (34%)	37 (44%)	10 (12%)	1 (1%)	8 (9%)
The Parish provides training in the various ministries.	21 (25%)	40 (47%)	3 (4%)	1 (1%)	20 (24%)
Parishioners are provided training to assist them in sharing their faith with others.	23 (27%)	31 (37%)	11 (13%)	2 (2%)	18 (21%)
I have a sense of belonging at this church.	48 (57%)	27 (32%)	6 (7%)	1 (1%)	3 (4%)
There is an overall sense of teamwork and cooperation within the parish.	27 (32%)	36 (42%)	14 (17%)	0	8 (9%)

A large majority of parishioners who answered a survey feel welcome at the Parish (about 96%). Regarding whether the Parish offers opportunities for parishioners to reach out and welcome the wider community, 78% agreed, 13%

disagreed, and 9% did not believe that statement applied to them. While a majority of parishioners indicated the Parish provides training in various ministries and training to assist them in sharing their faith with others, 15% disagreed that this type of training is provided and 21% do not believe the statement applies to them.

Nearly 89% of those who answered a survey agree with the statement that "I have a sense of belonging at this church" and 8% did not agree with the statement. Regarding an overall sense of teamwork and cooperation within the parish, 74% agreed that there is, and 17% disagreed with the statement.

As many parishioners commented on their surveys, there is always room for improvement in just about anything. The comments that appear in Appendix A lend additional insight into how parishioners feel about all of the topics covered in the survey. People made positive comments about the Bible Timeline Class, were thankful for volunteers, Others expressed a need for more inspirational services and materials, more advertising of events, were thankful for opportunities to show the love of Christ through the Soup Kitchen, visiting the sick, and outreach. Ideas ranged from hiring a youth minister to fostering better relationships within the Parish through a variety of means ranging from family retreats to sports teams that would foster relationships within the Parish.

It would be most interesting to hear from parishioners who did not complete a survey, or who don't attend Mass regularly any more to find out what is keeping them from attending, and if there is something ICC can do about it. Often it is a personal choice people are making not to attend, for example, social/community events or ministry, even if more events or training or services were offered.

The ICC parishioners survey reflects a caring desire to reach out to the people at ICC in order to see what people enjoy and might need to change. For some it may be a call to become more involved in the Parish, to see if the time is right for others to serve, to greet, to play music, to read the Word, and to bring along a friend or two. While results may not be comprehensive or representative of the parish as a whole, the survey succeeded in providing comments and ideas that are worthy of further thought or action.