

QUESTIONNAIRE ON SUNDAY WORSHIP

Report on In-pew Survey Responses of January 21 and January 27

(504 Questionnaires returned and responded to out of a total of 640 picked up. St. Stephen has 1267 registered families).

Many parishioners answered only certain questions. Some did not provide any information about themselves. Responses were graded on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 representing parishioners who were very pleased.

Question 1: “Mass schedule: How do you feel about the St. Stephen Mass Schedule. Does St. Stephen have enough Masses? Too Many? What do you think about the time of the Masses?”

Overwhelmingly, parishioners were quite satisfied with the Mass Schedule, offering an average 4.5 approval. While isolated parishioners wanted to tinker with the times of Masses, the vast majority were satisfied with the current schedule.

Question 2: “Pace of Mass: Is Mass too long? Too short? About right? Why?”

75% of parishioners rated the pace of Mass (c. 55 mins.) at a 4 or 5. The consensus was that the pace of Mass is good at St. Stephen. Of those parishioners unhappy with the pace of Mass, the consistent complaint was that it was too long. Many of the latter tied “too much music” to the complaint of length of Mass.

Question 3: “How would you rate the music at Mass? How could the music program at St. Stephen be improved?”

This question drew the most varied responses. 70% of parishioners rated the music at St. Stephen at 3.88. A large majority appreciates the music at Mass. The general feeling is that our cantors are talented and people enjoy the choir. The consistent complaint about the music is that the songs are in too high a key, or are too difficult to sing along with, or are too unfamiliar. Some younger parishioners (40s or younger) want more contemporary music. A fair number of people (in the upper age brackets) commented on the sound system. (This may relate more to how people use the microphones and not the system itself).

Question 4: “Attendance: How often do you attend Mass at St. Stephen? Every Sunday? Once a month? Once in a while? Infrequently? Which Mass do you usually attend? What improvements, changes, additions would encourage you to attend more often?”

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 representing people who attend every week, approximately 85% of those responding attend Mass once a week. The 8:00 a.m. Mass is the least well attended.

Question 5: “Atmosphere: Does St. Stephen do enough to make parishioners and guests feel welcome at Church?

90% responded at 4.5. Some felt we could do more to make newcomers and visitors welcome. Some thought the cantor should welcome new parishioners and visitors before Mass. Based on a review of the responses, St. Stephen makes people feel welcome, but we can keep trying to do better. (This may mean doing “coffee/donuts” at more Masses, and maybe “wine/cheese/crackers” after Saturday evening Mass).

Question 6: “Homilies: How do you feel about the quality of homilies given at Mass? How could they be improved?

Our priests graded pretty well in this question. Overall, this question got a 3.88. There is a trend that parishioners would like to keep the homilies to about 10-12 mins. A significant number of people also want to see more of a connection between the Gospel and our lives today. Like music, parishioners at St. Stephen are fairly opinionated about homilies. There was a consistent request for homilies that connect to our everyday life experience.

Question 7: “The Building: How do you feel about St. Stephen Church? Is there anything that can be done to the exterior or interior of the Church that would improve worship?

70% reported a 4.1 level of satisfaction. Trends we saw from the responses were that the sound system could be improved; the Church could use a paint job to brighten it up; the grounds/landscaping could be more inviting; we could put up banners outside for different times/seasons of the year; more lighting outside for evening Masses and other Church events in the evening. (We will prepare a list, prioritizing projects to keep the grounds and Church beautiful).

Question 8: “The School and CCD: Would you like to see more or less involvement from our school and CCD students during Mass?”

There was a very mixed response to this question. As opposed to other questions where we saw mostly “4s” and “5s”, we saw more “1s” and “5s” indicating that some people really wanted to see more kids, and some did not want more kids’ involvement. About 40% of respondents did not answer this question. We reckon that young people and parents want to see more kids being involved. Other parishioners, who are older (over 60) or with no ties to school or CCD want a quieter Mass.

Question 9: “Traditional v. Non-Traditional Forms of Worship: Do you believe St. Stephen has a traditional or non-traditional form of worship? Why?”

75% voted in favor of a traditional Mass. Some asked for Gregorian Chant at Mass. A few said they would like an occasional Latin Mass. The message the PC got from the responses was to “keep it the way that it is.” While music and homilies received a lot of comment – the parish still wants to the traditional Catholic Mass.

Question 10: “If there was one way to improve Mass at St. Stephen, what would it be and why?”

There were a significant number of non-responses to this question. It would seem that parishioners who did not respond are pleased with our form of worship. Improving music was one common thread in the responses we received.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Not everyone completed this part of the Questionnaire. With that caveat, here is the information we compiled about parishioners who responded to the Questionnaire.

Gender: 472 gave gender information: 298 female 174 male

Age: Under 20 – 17; 20s – 31; 30s 41; 40s – 53; 50s – 44; 60s – 56; 70s – 46; 80 and above – 26. An average reporting for this group was 55.4.

Parishioners v. Non parishioners: Over 90% of people responding were registered parishioners.