

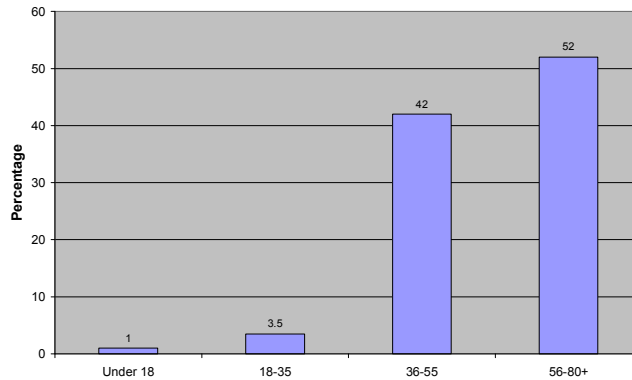
Parishes of St Clare & St Francis Xavier - Parish Survey 2007 Report

A Parish survey was completed in 2007 to establish the needs of the parishioners from St Clare's and St Francis Xavier. A response rate of 182 (which represents approximately 20% of all parishioners) completed survey. The results were collated and a report was finalized presenting all the data collected from the survey. This report will present a summary of the survey results. Should parishioners wish to view the entire document, copies can be obtained from the Parish office.

Demographics:

The greater majority of responses were received from parishioners from the 56 – over 80 age group (52%) with a 42% response rate from the age group 36 – 55. A response rate of 3.5% and 1% was received from the age groups 18 – 35 and under 18 respectively. The majority of those responding were female parishioners (75%). The greater majority of parishioners have lived in the parish for more than 30 years (34%), with 11% and 23% of parishioners having lived in the parish for more than 20 years and 10 years respectively.

Table 1: Responses by Age Group



Mass Attendance:

The church that people attend Mass is St Francis (73%) and St Clare's (25%). The Mass attended by the majority of parishioners is the Sunday 9.30 am Mass at St Francis, with 58 % indicating that they attended Mass on a weekly basis. The 7.30am Mass on a Sunday had the lowest attendance rate (5%).

Cultural Groups:

The majority of parishioners are Australian(73%) with representation from Asian, Italian, Chinese, European, UK, Africa and Greek communities.

The following results have been reported by combining the responses for agreed / strongly agreed (reported as agreed) & disagreed / strongly disagreed (reported as disagreed).

Faith and Faith Education Activities:

Eight four percent agreed that opportunities were provided in the parish to deepen their faith with 70% indicating that they were satisfied with Faith Education activities although only 49% felt that these activities took into consideration all age groups. While 70% felt that Franciscan Spirituality was important to them, only 64 % indicated that they understood the concept. Sixty eight percent of parishioners indicated that they would be willing to support new Faith opportunities provided by the parish.

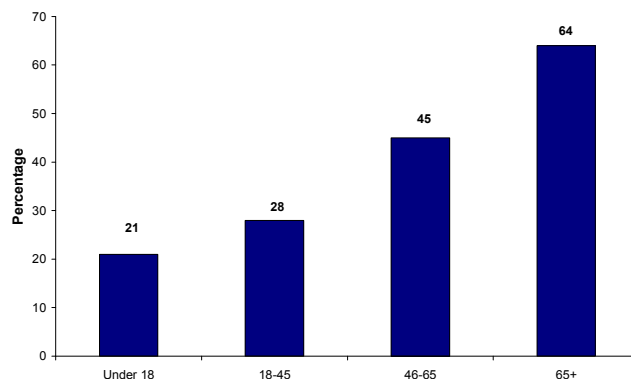
Liturgy:

The majority of parishioners agreed that they were satisfied with the format of the liturgy (74%) with 59% agreeing that a diverse range of liturgical experiences were provided to enrich their faith. The Sunday homily is an enriching experience for 72% with 75% indicating that the homily is relevant to their life. The children's liturgy is seen as an important part of Sunday Mass (78%). Most felt that the use of taped / CD music was a viable alternative to live music (75%) as many considered music to be an important part of the liturgy (84%). Most parishioners felt that the parish provides adequate access to devotions such as Adoration (76%).

Parish Community:

The majority indicated that they felt welcomed and included in the Parish community (87%) and felt that the Parish does reach out to the wider community (72%) while only 58% felt that this includes reaching out to disadvantage groups. Only 57% felt that the Parish is welcoming to non practising Catholics and non Catholic people in the Parish community with only 57% agreeing the Parish actively seeks to encourage non practicing Catholics to return to their faith. 72% felt that social aspects of Parish life were important to them and indicated that that they would be prepared to support Parish social and community activities.

Table 2: Pastoral Needs Being Met by Age Group



With regards to whether the pastoral needs of the various age groups are being met, the following results were received (agreed with the statement: youth (21%), 18 – 45 (28%), 46 -65 (45%); 65 & over (64%). It was felt that the needs of the sick are being met (63%) with the Parish hospital visitation program meeting the needs of the Parish community (60%). While 38% felt that the parish needs more pastoral workers, only 42% of indicated that they would be willing to assist with pastoral activities.

Social Justice:

Active involvement in areas of social justice was supported by 70% of the parishioners with 60% indicating that it is the role of the church to provide education with regards to social issues. Only 36% indicated that they would be willing to be involved in social justice activities. The majority agreed that the Parish community seeks to serve those in need (84%). East Timor support was felt to be important for 74% with 65% indicating that the role of the Parish is to support indigenous groups and needy groups (45%).

Lay Leaders in the Parish

With regards to some liturgies being led by lay ministers, only 54% agreed with this statement (26% neither agree/nor disagree). Fifty four percent felt that there are enough roles in the church for lay people to become involved with the consideration of providing appropriate training for them to be able to participate in these roles (73%). Only a small number indicated that they would like to be given the opportunity to lead the liturgy (13%) and that sufficient training should be provided for lay ministers in the Parish (30%).

Sacramental Programs

63% felt that the Baptism program meets the needs of families with 69% agreeing that preparation for the Sacraments is meeting the needs of the community. Most people (75%) felt that parishioners should be offered a variety of educational programs with only 48% agreeing that the RCIA program meets the needs of the Parish community. Overall, it was agreed that the Sacramental programs offered by the Parish are adequate in meeting the needs of the community (64%).

Many agreed that adequate access was being made available to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (79%). Only 48% indicated that they would continue to attend this Parish regularly in the absence of a Priest with 61% indicating that they would attend a neighboring Parish and 60% indicating that the involvement of Priests in all ministerial aspects of the church is important. The Parish staff was found to be welcoming and helpful (85%) with the care and leadership offered by the Pastoral Associate meeting the needs of the Parish (50%). A majority of people (81%) agreed that a Priest has provided spiritual support when required and that the Parish was meeting the needs of its parishioners (78%). Only 63% indicated that leadership was being provided by the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) with 62% agreeing that the PPC was doing a good job in terms of visibility and approachability. Many felt that the relationship with St Francis Xavier school was strong and vibrant (65%).

Maintenance:

With regards to church building maintenance, 66% felt that St Francis Xavier building is being well being maintained with only 50% indicating that St Clare's building is being well maintained. Parking was felt to be adequate at both St Francis Xavier (74%) and at St Clare's (57%). With regards to the sound system enhancing the parishioners participation in Mass, 68% and 41% agreed (St Francis Xavier and St Clare's respectively). Heating and cooling was rated lower for both churches (54% agreed for St Francis Xavier with only 32% agreeing for St Clare's). While 73% felt that the Parish Hall at St Francis was being well maintained, only 34% agreed about maintenance of St Clare's hall

While some of the issues that have been reported are not as self evident as they could be (difficulty in reporting all the statistics) (there were many questions where the parishioners had indicated neither agree / nor disagree), many comments were received with the completed surveys providing some insightful feedback for the PPC to consider. Many of the comments were wonderfully positive, particularly those relating to the Friars.

A summary of the main comments have been provided below:

1. Maintenance improvements for both church buildings
2. More support for the elderly in getting to Mass on a weekend
3. Further faith education opportunities for the Parish community
4. Music to be modernized and relevant for the youth in the community
5. A greater leadership role for lay people to increase their participation in the parish community
6. Disabled parking in the grounds closer to the church
7. Social activities and more engagement of the youth both liturgically and spiritually
8. Special prayers to be printed in the newsletter
9. Increase number of Sacrament teachers
10. More social functions are required for the community to become involved
11. Encourage the youth to become involved in sacraments and Parish with more youth led Masses
12. More efficient Pastoral Care with greater involvement in charity groups.

It was decided by the PPC to record all statements that received a score of less than 2.7 (out of 5) and those items would be the focus of the PPC activities over the next few years. There were 33 items which have been prepared on a spreadsheet to provide a working plan for the PPC. While they are all considered to be important, each year the PPC will be taking on a 2 -3 different projects to ensure that they are dealt with both efficiently and effectively. The items identified as requiring the immediate action and will therefore be considered the focus of the PPC projects during 2008 include:

1. Providing more opportunities for the Youth of the parish to increase their participation in the community
2. Preparation of lay people increasing their participation in leading the community
3. Maintenance of the church buildings

I would like to thank everyone who completed the Parish survey. Your time and effort is appreciated and your feedback has provided the PPC with valuable information about the Parish community.

Trish Nicholson
Parish Pastoral Council Chair