

## Parish Survey Summarization of Written Comments

Comments written on the parish survey were frequent and varied in length from a few words to nearly full page of single-spaced typed text. From 264 surveys, over 150 households offered comments, some positive, some negative, some neutral, and many offered suggestions for improvement.

In previous surveys, all comments were published for parishioners to read. With comments totaling over 30 pages of typed text, the cost to publish all comments seems prohibitive. In an effort to give an overall feel for comments made, a matrix was created that allowed the committee to look at each item and summarize each comment as it related to the item. The summary from the matrix is presented below; listing is by survey item.

### Survey Item 1

1. My/Our household description best matches
  - a. Single man
  - b. Single woman
  - c. Married couple with no children at home
  - d. Married couple with children at home
  - e. Single male with children
  - f. Single female with children

Five households responded. Four indicated new babies were on the way; one volunteered that one spouse was not Catholic.

**Survey Items 2 and 3** yielded **no** written comments.

### Survey Item 4

2. I/we feel that as a Catholic I/we are called to be a disciple of Christ and a steward of His gifts.

I/we whole heartedly agree	I/we agree somewhat	I/we neither agree nor disagree	I/we disagree somewhat	I/we totally disagree
5	4	3	2	1

One respondent crossed out the word “Catholic” and inserted “Christian”

**Survey Items 5 and 6** yielded no written comments.

### Survey Item 7

3. What is your perception of our **current** parish financial situation?

The parish currently generates revenue necessary to pay our operating bills, reduce our outstanding debt, and put money aside for future	The parish currently generates revenue necessary to pay our operating bills, and make the required payments to reduce our outstanding debt	The parish currently generates revenue necessary to pay operating bills, and make the required payments to reduce but frequently spends from emergency	The parish currently generates barely enough revenue to pay our operating bills.	The parish currently is unable to pay our operating expenses.

projects		accounts.		
5	4	3	2	1

Six respondents replied that they either didn't know or had "no idea".

### Survey Item 8

I/we understand that as a member of Saint Monica Parish, a total stewardship parish, that parishioners are currently expected to tithe (5% of our taxable income to the parish, 1% to the archdiocese, and 4% to other charities of our choice) and give of our time (an average at least one hour per week beyond worship) and talent to support the parish.

I/we whole heartedly agree	I/we agree somewhat	I/we neither agree nor disagree	I/we disagree somewhat	I/we totally disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Two respondents replied. One did not agree with "10% of \$ but not with service"; another indicated agreement with concept but simply was not in a position to tithe.

### Survey Item 9

I/we currently tithe according to the guidelines indicated in the item above.

Yes, I/we give even more than the guidelines specify	Yes, I/we give as the guidelines specify	I/we give, but circumstances do not allow giving as specified	I/we don't believe in tithing, I/we contribute as I/we see fit	I/we rarely contribute
5	4	3	2	1

Six responded; one indicated they were already giving 10%; four indicated they couldn't currently tithe to the guidelines because of financial circumstances, another felt he/she could not because the spouse was not Catholic.

### Survey Item 10

I currently offer one hour or more each week beyond my worship obligation to the service of the parish and/or its services.

Yes, I/we offer time greater than guidelines indicate	Yes, I/we offer time as the guidelines indicate	I/we offer time, but my/our circumstances do not allow service as indicated	I/we would serve, but no one has ever asked	I/we feel we have no time to donate to the church
5	4	3	2	1

Six responded – all indicated they are not now offering service because of various constraints, but they intended to do so when they could.

### Survey Item 11

I/we feel the call to discipleship requires that all Catholics spread the word of Jesus Christ to others.

I/we whole heartedly agree	I/we agree somewhat	I/we neither agree nor disagree	I/we disagree somewhat	I/we totally disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Two respondents replied; one crossed out the word "Catholic" and inserted "Christian"; the other indicated we should "bring good news".

**Survey Item 12**

At St. Monica we spread the Word of Jesus Christ to others through various ways: Religious education for our children, RCIA ((Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults) for those interested in the Catholic faith, adult education programs.

Please rate your perception of the effectiveness of these entities by circling a number for each category. A rating of 5 would be highly effective and a rating of 1 would be highly ineffective. A rating of NA would indicate no knowledge of program.

	Highly effective			Highly ineffective		Unknown
Religious Education for Pre-School children	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Religious Education for Elementary children	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Religious Education for children preparing						
for First Confession	5	4	3	2	1	NA
for First Holy Communion	5	4	3	2	1	NA
for Confirmation	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Religious Education for Jr. High (7-8 <sup>th</sup> grade) Students	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Religious Education for High School Students (9-12)	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Summer religious education opportunities	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Adult Education	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Adult programs	5	4	3	2	1	NA
RCIA	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Special events like missions and retreats	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Other _____	5	4	3	2	1	NA

Twenty-three persons wrote in reference to the pre-school category. Four thought RE for this group was very effective, doing well, or improving. Two indicated there were too many children in spaces that were too crowded. One wanted assistance for special needs children. Two thought more parental involvement was needed; one wanted teacher forums where teachers could meet to discuss what was working and what was not. Another wanted pre-school RE available for three-year-olds.

Sixteen responders wrote in reference to the elementary age category. Five parents would like to see “more interesting” classes. Two said opening a school was imperative because you simply cannot teach RE adequately in 25 sessions. Three did not want RE sessions to coincide with Sunday Mass times. Two wanted it to resemble more closely Summer RE, one volunteered to help, another wanted the teachers to have more guidance. The remaining responders did not feel qualified to judge because they “didn’t know” or were “too new to know”.

Concerning First Communion and First Confession preparation, only one responder wrote the content needed to be more “in depth”.

Households addressing the Confirmation category indicated: 1.) Sessions should span two-years but should be short-tracked to allow more flexibility with scheduling, explaining that it is very difficult to meet all priorities. Another thought the content was too depressing, that it should deal more with faith issues not marriage, drugs, and others.

In the Jr. High and High School listings, a responder indicated teachers did too much preaching about daily life (drinking, drugs, etc.). Another responder appreciated the fact that students were allowed to bring their friends, showing a spirit of openness.

In the adult education and adult programs, these needs surfaced: reach out to more youths and adults and initiate more adult and men’s programs. Two were pleased with the recent increase in programs, while three wanted more variety in the offering times (morning, afternoon, and evening). Comments related to RCIA indicated it was doing well but more meeting space was needed. Still another suggested, “It might be helpful to consider scheduling RCIA at a time other than Sunday mornings if you’re trying to encourage education about Catholicism for spouses who may be attending another church at that time.”

Comments under “other” revealed that a responder “loved” the musical presentation “Jonah” last summer and thought it was an excellent attempt at teaching Bible stories.

**Survey Item 13**

At St. Monica Parish, we strive to engage parishioners through various hospitality efforts. Please rank the effectiveness of these efforts to the following groups by circling 5 for highly effective or 1 for highly ineffective. A rating of NA would indicate no knowledge of program.

	Highly effective			Highly ineffective Unknown		
Newcomers	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Young Single Adults	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Single Parent Families	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Married Adult Couples	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Senior Citizens	5	4	3	2	1	NA
High School Students	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Middle School Students	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Moms Group	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Parish Women	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Parish Men	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Spanish population	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Persons with Disability	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Members of other faith (spouses of Catholics)	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Other _____	5	4	3	2	1	NA

Under the Newcomer category, three responders noted that there were many options from which to choose. Two indicated they would like to have more “active invitations” to the various options with “better descriptions” of various activities within the options. One indicated that after two years as a parishioner, there was still a feeling of being “alone”. One really appreciated the letters each year to non-Catholic spouses while another felt non-Catholic spouses should be made to feel more welcome. Another felt a tour of the facility would add a nice touch to the newcomer meeting. Two sets of suggestions were made for improvement to the welcoming effort:

- I believe/suggest that the entire new parishioner welcoming process be reviewed and improved. The “best in class” welcoming process that I have experienced included the following elements: 1) Monthly (pre-scheduled) newcomer meetings; 2) Each Sunday it was announced during Mass (the next newcomer meeting date) because every Sunday there were newcomers in the pews; 3) there should be a core team who attend the newcomer meetings and speak/answer questions about the different, wonderful opportunities for stewardship.
- Catholics are not traditionally a “meet and greet” group. At St. Monica’s we try to change that, but we have a long way to go! More greeters at entrance of church willing to meet, greet, and actually converse with others is needed.

Three comments called for more activity for young singles and single parents. Two wanted more activity and participation by the Jr. High and High school youth groups. One wrote the youth groups’ activity was very good. Three commented that the Women’s Society was poorly attended or needed more active participation. Five indicated that the Spanish parishioners should be integrated into the larger parish community, rather than being treated as is they belonged to a totally separate church. Three asked that hearing headsets for the hearing impaired be available. Finally, under the “other” category, one person wrote, “help newcomers embrace stewardship”.

**Survey Item 14**

Please rank the effectiveness of parish efforts to provide meaningful opportunities for prayer and reflection by circling 5 for highly effective through 1 for highly ineffective. A rating of NA would indicate no knowledge of program.

	Highly effective				Highly ineffective		Unknown
Weekend Mass frequency/schedule	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
Holyday Mass schedule	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
Daily Mass schedule	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
Homilies	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
Liturgical Music	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
Perpetual Adoration	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
Additional Opportunities for group prayer	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
Penance Rites	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
Small Community Faith Groups	5	4	3	2	1	NA	
Other _____	5	4	3	2	1	NA	

Several responders commented they would like different Sunday Mass times: two wanted 7:00 or 7:30 a.m.; two wanted to return to the 8:30 a.m. because large geographic area required some families to travel 15-20 minutes to attend; two wanted 9:00 a.m.; six stated a preference for Sunday evening Masses; one wanted two Sunday evening Masses. Beyond the time issue, two stated the church was too cold during Mass and included utility costs would be decreased if temperatures were less extreme. Another person did not want RE to coincide with Mass times; another wanted simpler, not high Masses; and another wanted a longer silence after communion.

“Holy Day Schedule” yielded a number of comments. The following comments each appeared once: too limited, schedule at noon, 5:30 and 7:30; want early morning on Ash Wednesday; wants earlier evening if on school night, wants later evening on work days,

and noon Masses don't work for working parishioners. Two stated that more should attend a homilies should focus on the obligation to attend.

"Daily Mass Schedule" received comments as well. Three want more Masses during the day with one suggesting that there be two morning Masses (perhaps Wednesday and Friday) and two evening Masses (perhaps Tuesday and Thursday). Two responders indicated 6:00 p.m. Mass would be better than 5:30, another stated 5:30 is tough to make because of work schedules. Another stated a need for Mass or Communion Service on Monday evening.

Homilies drew positive comments: two stated "Great!", another "Excellent", one "Good!". Although rated at 4, one comment indicated Fr. Tim used "maybe" or "perhaps" too often; others wanted the focus to be on Orthodox instruction, real life with no politics, and directed to hold the attention of 14 year-olds.

Liturgical music comments suggested more members were needed (2 comments), especially youth (1 comment). One stated, adding "Christmas was beautiful with all members present!" One response stated "improving all the time" while another said "needs improvement". Three thought the songs should be more lively and easier to sing, another wanted verses to cease once the celebrant processed down the aisle. Five wrote "great", "excellent", "love the hymns."

Under the Perpetual Adoration section, it was noted as a "real gift to the parish" and a "great source of spirituality". One wrote sometimes lot of day-time traffic made its way through the chapel limiting the ability to meditate. Two indicated substitutes should be easier to access. Despite suggestions, all comments seemed to indicate the "awesome" experience Perpetual Adoration provided.

Within the additional opportunities for prayer category, one respondent sought additional Rosary groups. Regarding the area marked Penance Rites, comments written were "very available", need confession opportunity when Fr. Tim is away, and "add Saturday morning" confession times. Another responder wrote more should attend the Penance rites; another suggested making the reconciliation room available during the service for people who preferred no to confess face-to-face.

The Small Groups section garnered several responses. One responder stated that the small groups were "operating under the radar"; another was unaware there were any. Six stated there was a real need for small groups similar to the Renew groups; one responder still meets with a group from St. John's. Another wrote that he/she "didn't get a thing out of Renew".

Finally, under the "other" category, one stated, "Making the services more friendly to non-Catholic spouses would be of benefit. I'm Lutheran but have difficulty with the Liturgy as much of it is not written but known if one has a Catholic background."

**Survey Item 15**

The parish frequently has scheduling difficulties for activities and religious education. Please rank the following facilities as to your perception of need by circling priority 4 as the most needed to priority 1 as least needed.

	Most needed			Least needed
Additional meeting space for adult and RE	4	3	2	1
Nursery and Pre-School space	4	3	2	1
Elementary school	4	3	2	1
Other _____	4	3	2	1

This item yielded nine comments, three indicated they had no opinion. Others wrote the following needs in the blank provided: RCIA space, additional space for activities and groups, High School, Gym & meeting rooms, classroom for meetings and rooms, and “all are needed”.

**Survey Item 16**

How valuable do you feel a Catholic school education is to the **spiritual formation** of children at St. Monica?

Extremely important	Somewhat important	The spiritual formation they receive now at St. Monica and at home is adequate	Not very important	Not important at all
5	4	3	2	1

Only three comments related to this item appeared. Under option number three, one doubted spiritual formation at home; one stressed the importance of support of religious education; and another indicated “it all depends on how school is run”.

**Survey Item 17**

How valuable do you feel a Catholic school education is to the **character development** of children at St. Monica?

Extremely important	Somewhat important	The character development they receive now is adequate	Not very important	Not important at all
5	4	3	2	1

Only two written comments surfaced: under the third option the word “most” was inserted and another person wrote some “bad characters” were in the Catholic schools with which he/she was familiar.

**Survey Item 18**

How valuable do you feel a Catholic school education is to the **academic development** of children at St. Monica?

Extremely important	Somewhat important	The academic development received now in public schools is adequate	Not very important	Not important at all
5	4	3	2	1

Six persons offered comments on this item. Under the third option the word “most” was inserted. Two wrote that Catholic schools do not measure up to public schools in academics based on either experience or hearsay. Two wrote that public school is adequate or has more to offer. Another stated that Catholic schools “must surpass public schools” if children were to attend because of tuition costs.

**Survey Item 19**

**If in the event** it was found feasible to open a parish school at St. Monica, it is necessary to determine if adequate numbers of students will attend. By placing a check in the correct box below, please indicate which grade level(s) your child(ren) will be entering in **August 2007**. Also, and **most importantly**, please indicate by checking “yes” or “no” whether you would enroll your child(ren) in Saint Monica school, **if it were to open** and include that grade in the school. If undecided, mark **unsure**.

	Pre-K	All Day K	Gr. 1	Gr. 2	Gr. 3	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6	Gr. 7	Gr. 8	Yes	No	Unsure
Child #1													
Child #2													
Child #3													
Child #4													
Child #5													
Child #6													

In addition to filling in the blanks marking grades, eight survey respondents added these comments: 1.) Absolutely! 2.) Hard to switch, kids attend St. Mary’s. 3.) Will you accept special needs children? 4.) Kids are with Mom in January. 5.) Why isn’t St. Eugene’s School listed? 6.) Afraid we can’t afford. 7.) Will Catholic faith be taught? 8.) If it includes all the grades my kids need.

**Survey Item 20**

As a parent of a potential student at Saint Monica School, I/we would be:

Willing to step up my/our giving to support a Catholic School even though 8% of my/our taxable income or more is already given to the parish.	Willing to reallocate my/our tithing with 7-8% of my/our taxable income given to the church, 1% to the Archdiocese and 1-2% to other charities.	Willing to tithe <b>only</b> according to the original parish guidelines with 5% of my taxable income given to the church, 1% to the Archdiocese and 1-2% to other charities.	Although I/we cannot currently give 5% of my/our taxable income, I/we would be willing to step up giving with the eventual goal of 7-8% to be reached as soon as possible	Willing to pay a set amount for tuition based on the cost of educating per child and/or pledge to a building fund
5	4	3	2	1

Seven comments were added including: 1.) Can't afford. 2.) Want grandchild to attend. 3.) Will do my best. 4.) Prefer to give to other charities. 5.) No response applies. Two of the seven stated: Unsure if children will attend (transfer) but still will help.

**Survey Item 21**

As a parent of a potential Saint Monica School student I/we would be willing to:

Volunteer an average of at least one hour per week to the school in addition to the one hour or more per week currently served in the parish	Although I don't currently volunteer my time, I would be willing to give an hour per week to the church and an hour per week to the school	Although I don't currently volunteer my time, I would be willing to give an hour per week to the school	I/we do not choose to volunteer for service to the church or school
4	3	2	1

Only one comment appeared: Will volunteer under current guidelines.

**Survey Item 22**

I/we do **not** have children who could benefit from Saint Monica School but I realize that it is my responsibility as a disciple of Christ to spread His Word. I believe a Catholic School is the best way to form our youth, retain them in their faith, and generate vocations. Therefore, I would be willing to:

Willing to step up my/our giving to support a Catholic School even though 8% of my/our taxable income or more is already given to the parish.	Willing to reallocate my/our tithing with 7-8% of my/our taxable income given to the church, 1% to the Archdiocese and 1-2% to other charities.	Willing to tithe <b>only</b> according to the original parish guidelines with 5% of my taxable income given to the church, 1% to the Archdiocese and 1-2% to other charities.	Although I/we cannot currently give 5% of my/our taxable income, I/we would be willing to step up giving with the eventual goal of 7-8% to be reached as soon as possible.	Although I/we recognize the value of a Catholic Education, we can not increase contributions
5	4	3	2	1

Survey respondents offered eight comments. Three indicated they were giving 8%, 8.4%, or 10% and would not be giving more. One indicated a willingness to support

occasionally, another to make a one-time donation, and another to support a child. One indicated he/she did not believe a Catholic School is the best way to form our youth, etc. The eighth respondent felt the survey was biased and no response was applicable.

**Survey Item 23**

I/we do **not** have children who can benefit from Saint Monica School but I realize that it is my responsibility as a disciple of Christ to spread His Word. Therefore I would be:

Willing to continue volunteering an average of at least one hour per week to the church and add 1 hour per week to the school	Willing to continue volunteering an average of at least one hour per week to the church and occasionally volunteer in the school	Although I don't currently volunteer my time, I would be willing to give an hour per week to the church and an hour per week to the school	Although I don't currently volunteer my time, I would be willing to give an hour per week to the school	I/we do not choose to volunteer for service to the church or school
5	4	3	2	1

The last survey item prompted four respondents to write, "Will volunteer at church only", another wrote "Will give as time allows". The sixth wrote that the survey was biased and responses were too limited.

There were over 70 comments made related to the school issue. Six respondents indicated their desire to build the school immediately, 22 indicated strong support for the school with one of those hoping to teach kindergarten, one stressing the need for parental volunteerism, and another promising to be a strong financial supporter, 22 indicated they would support but with stipulations. These included:

- no free rides;
- if I don't have to move my kids;
- if affordable and feasible (2),
- if it's tuition-based (3);
- if it doesn't decrease other programs (2);
- when current debt is sufficiently decreased or paid off entirely (5);
- if a fund drive is conducted to pay for the building (2);
- if it maintains high academic quality, if it accepts and can serve special needs students;
- if the burden does not fall on Fr. Tim.
- if a religious order teaches or a nun is principal
- if the teaching strictly adheres to the Magisterium of the Holy Catholic Church in all subjects
- when we can afford to build the school rather than go with temporary buildings
- if parents pay, others should not, prefers private school vouchers.

And finally,

- If it is built with love of God, it will turn out fine & everything will fall into place.

Some respondents commented that it is really hard to move happy kids, others said they would support the school with finances and/or volunteering when/if their kids did attend. Another did not understand the stewardship vs. tuition-based school concept.

Seven responders expressed opposition; one stating that he/she did not agree, another stating two Catholic schools in one town is “overkill”. The third was afraid non-students (St. Monica’s) would be treated like “step children”. A fourth stated it has to be self-supportive, independent from church funding. Another was unimpressed with the academic record of Catholic schools. The sixth stated that the “majority” should rule, conceding that if the majority was in favor of the school he/she would support it . The seventh indicated a high school was preferred.

Though not necessarily unsupportive, survey responders cautioned and expressed these reservations:

- Confidentiality is a huge legal issue. A secretary should be a paid position. No parents should have access to other children’s records. The school needs to be handicapped accessible in all areas. Tuition-based is the most practical to avoid many problems. I have already heard it said that people who give the most money should have dibs and places. Not Good.
- Regardless of whether a school at St. Monica is to come into being, a good RE Program should be in place to ensure all St. Monica children are given good Religious Education as all of them would not necessarily go to a Catholic School.
- I worry that if we open a school, it will split the parish, and that the school students will get preference in programming. I think all sacramental prep should be done parish-wide, not split between school and non-school (i.e., First Holy Communion).

Responses addressing “other comments” were centered mostly on “stewardship” issues. Five thought the church was straying from stewardship and the founding principle upon which St. Monica was founded; two were concerned that hiring staff to do jobs formerly would diminish enthusiasm for volunteers, two thought it needed to be taught to newcomers to enable them to embrace the concept; and one indicated the parish needed to pray for growth in stewardship. Three thought more emphasis upon service was necessary and tithing should be de-emphasized, one indicated tithing was insulting while another said “to get on board”, ask 10% or give up the concept. Another did not want to be asked to give to a fund raiser, especially by an outside fund raising organization. Time and talent contributions had issues as well: two complained they had volunteered but had never been called, another stated that it was hard to find time with working schedules, one was unsure where he/she fit in. One parishioner was concerned with the nursery, indicated it needed attention. Another parishioner wanted to thank all those who worked so hard to keep the parish and its grounds beautiful.

Some comments addressed issues concerning Mass or Mass scheduling. One wanted to see the Host raised and bells rung to remind participants of the significance of the event. Another thought it was too cold hoping that the temperature would be adjusted a few degrees and wanting faster tempo on music. Another requested an earlier Mass on Christmas Eve and other wanted Masses geared more to the youth.

A few were concerned with areas of hospitality. One stated the Women's Society would die without more involvement, another wanted more small groups, others identified need for single adult groups and welcoming non-Catholic spouses, and another wanted more socialization opportunities in general.

Two people commented on the survey. One indicated it was biased, would result in skewed results and was far too complex to tabulate. Another thanked the church for the opportunity to air comments through a survey. Two were very complimentary of the parish, one pleased with the way it was run, another stated it was "home".