

ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER CLUSTER 2018 PARISHIONER SURVEY SUMMARY

Dr. Kurt Wood | Survey Coordinator | SJWC Pastoral Council

160 of the 1,050 SJWC parishioners age 15 or older – estimated by the Archdiocese of Dubuque Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning – completed the survey. The 15.2% response rate is on par with the average for similar types of surveys.

Response By Parish Holy Name – West Union (**36.8%/36.9%**¹); Immaculate Conception – Sumner (**22.4%/28.4%**); St. Francis – Fayette (**15.8%/19.3%**); St. Peter – Clermont (**25.0%/15.4%**)

Respondent Age 15 – 30 **11%** 31 – 49 **22%** 50 – 65 **29%** ≥ 66 **38%**

Nearly **50%** of respondents self-described as having “*deep faith that shapes their life;*” **37%** acknowledged having “*faith that needs strengthening,*” and **14%** admittedly “*participate in Mass only.*”

Liturgy- and Worship-related Survey Statements: Two-thirds or more (≥67%) of respondents agree that – their parish valued good music; the sound at worship is clear and audible from all church locations; devotions such as rosaries, stations, etc. are offered in their parish; their parish had disabled-accessible parking, entrance and bathrooms; their parish participates in activities with other SJWC parishes; scriptures are well proclaimed during liturgies, and; the pastor serves as a positive example of devotion to the Catholic faith and of service to others.

65% strongly or mildly agree/neutral that the weekend Mass rotation is satisfactory; 29% disagree. 60% felt that people with disabilities have opportunity to participate in liturgy ministries.

Youth-related Survey Statements: Two-thirds or more (≥67%) of respondents agree that – young people are encouraged and given opportunity to participate in worship; young people have opportunities to serve in the parish; children, youth and couples are well-prepared for the sacraments, and; that the youth faith formation (catechism) program offered by their parish is satisfactory.

65% agree that parents actively participate in the sacramental preparation of their children.

Personal and Spiritual Development Survey Statements: Two-thirds or more (≥67%) of respondents agree that – sacramental preparation involves the entire family; parents are supported in their role as teachers of the faith; they are encouraged to care for people in need and work toward justice; their parish affords opportunity to give of one’s self in ministry or service; opportunities exist for pondering the meaning of God’s word in their life; couples are prepared for and supported in their married life; families receive spiritual resources and practical support; Catholic stewardship involves giving of one’s time, talent and treasure, and; that they are encouraged to discover the presence of God in everyday life.

Half strongly agree and half disagree that their parish offers opportunities for ongoing adult faith formation. While 50% mildly agree or are neutral that households are provided with materials to grow in faith at home, 20% disagree. Over half disagree or are uncertain that parishioners have opportunity to share their personal faith experiences. Nearly half disagree or are uncertain that parishioners are given opportunity to learn about Catholic social teaching, that adults are encouraged to explore the doctrines of the Church, or that they are equipped to critically evaluate the media in light of Christian values.

Parish- or Cluster-related Survey Statements: Two-thirds or more (≥67%) of respondents agree that – their parish works with other cluster parishes to care for people in need; volunteers are properly invited, prepared and recognized in their parish; their parish addresses issues of conscience/social justice; their parish demonstrates abundant care and concern; they have knowledge of the SJWC-RCIA program; their parish encourages all forms of ministry; cluster leaders encourage dialogue among the cluster parishes; their parish celebrates diversity, confronts discrimination and encourages tolerance, and; that their parish knows of its mission beyond the walls of the church.

¹ Parish percentage of SJWC population per ARCH-DBQ

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55% disagree or are uncertain that inactive Catholics are invited to participate in parish activities. While 66% agree that their parish is welcoming to all and seeks out those who may feel less accepted, 22% disagree. Although 64% of respondents agree that young adults (age 18-35) serve in visible parish leadership roles, 28% disagree. 60% mildly or strongly agree that the SJWC website is useful and kept current; 30% are uncertain.

Items You Wish Were Offered In Your Parish To Help Meet Spiritual Needs

35% Bible study **29% Continuing faith formation** **29% Small group participation** **24% Friends who share faith with me** **15% Parish/cluster retreat** **24% Other** – Eucharistic adoration; Guidance on living a more spiritual life; More time for Confessions; Group/communal reconciliation; Support group for working Moms (balancing faith, family, work, etc.); Inspirational movies/videos in the church or hall

Items That Would Help Your Faith Grow Stronger

- 25%** Lecture/video series that further explores Catholic teaching/faith
- 22%** Small group sessions that focus on faith and life connections
- 15%** Faith-related reflections delivered via email or web link
- 11%** Regularly scheduled Bible study
- 11%** Brief time after Mass to reflect upon readings and homily

Comments Summary

There were 65 total qualitative comments, most of which were extensive, covering several topics/concerns/suggestions, nearly all of which were constructive.²

- Several commented on how important clergy visits are to shut-ins, the elderly and those in nursing homes.
- Some did not feel Mass times were acceptable, while others did, given the cluster was down to one priest.
- Disagreement with current, single Holy Day Mass at one church, believing this alienates some parishioners.
- Suggestion was made to switch parish Mass rotation to April-September and October-March to correspond with fall dinner being offered on a Sunday at those parishes.
- A number of respondents commented on youth/young people – or the absence thereof – in the church.
- Suggested that the Pastor more visibly display humility, empathy and compassion, and act friendlier to parishioners; by doing so he will be respected more and perceived as the shepherd of the SJWC flock.
- Compliments were extended to those individuals currently offering music, but it was suggested that the music ministry be expanded particularly in two parishes.
- Several respondents expressed concern about the religious formation program in their parish; some suggest giving thought to the development of a Cluster RFP. Others complimented their parish's religious formation program.
- Suggestion that the cluster look to employ a youth minister.
- Many would like to see the Pastor more involved with the RFP & be visible to the youth participating in it.
- It is observed that the number of students involved in Wednesday RFP seems much greater than those attending weekend Mass; suggest involving more young families and youth at Mass (e.g., lector, usher).
- Design a survey (or have small group discussions) with young people to focus on their spiritual needs and keep them involved in the church.
- Continue with monthly fellowship of coffee, donuts or some other light snack, even during a parish's Saturday Mass rotation.
- Consider offering communal/group penance.
- Committee meetings need to be better organized, and run more efficiently and effectively; 3-hour meetings are unnecessary.
- Comments about attitudes of "been there, done that" or "already tried that;" come to find out that was 20 years ago! Need to consciously enlist 18-45 y/o parishioner ideas, be more welcoming to new members and be a family-oriented community of faith.
- Consider use of video technology during Mass.
- A number of respondents complimented the pastor and deacon for their service to the parishes.

² This is a concise summary of important points – comments critical to a named person or parish have been edited.