

Mass Attendance & Household Trends at Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parishes

This communication is the first in a series that will be looking at data from our parishes. The last communication was focused on the entire Archdiocese of Seattle and covered data from 1999 to 2018. Our data will focus on more recent trends, looking at data from 2015 to 2019. Data from 2020 will not be used as this data is impacted significantly by COVID restrictions.

If you would rather not read through all the summary of data, please feel free to scroll to the end and read “**Key Findings**”.

Prior to getting into the details of 2015-2019, I will call attention to a few events that have occurred in the last 30+ years in our parishes.

- In 1987, Immaculate Conception School and Our Lady of Perpetual Help schools merged into one location at the ICP campus. From 1988-1999 Holy Cross High School operated out of the OLPH campus.
- Fr. Joseph Petosa retires as Pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.
- In 1994, both parishes began to function under the leadership of one pastor (Fr. Dennis Robb).
- 2007 Fr. Dennis Robb leaves and Fr. Bryan Hersey named Pastor.
- 2018 Fr. Hersey leaves and Fr. Joseph Altenhofen named Pastor.
- From early 2017 until mid-2018 parishes operated without a Pastor (temporary Pastoral Coordinator assigned, Parochial Vicar and Parish Priest in place during this time).
- Since 1995, the high mark for Mass attendance for ICP was 1,711 in 2007. The low was 663 in 1995. (*Note that the total attendance will likely include OLPH parishioners).
- Since 1995, the high mark for Mass attendance for OLPH was 1,088 in 2015. The low was 600 in 2009. (*Note that the total attendance will likely include ICP parishioners).

Please note that Mass count numbers by Mass can be misleading by individual parish or by Mass. It is not uncommon (especially in the last several years) for members of one parish to attend the other parish. There are a number of parishioners that are registered at one parish and attend the other parish almost weekly due to Mass schedules. In addition, the number of Masses has also been adjusted upwards and downwards based on perceived needs of parishioners. Currently there are 4 English Masses, 1 Hispanic Mass and 1 Vietnamese Mass each weekend. There has been the reduction of 1 Sunday (Vigil) Mass during this time period.

Mass Attendance Trends

Actual Mass Attendance Trends – Immaculate Conception Parish (2015-2019)

- 2015 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 1246
- 2016 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 980 (21% decrease)
- 2017 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 976 (.4% decrease)
- 2018 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 895 (8% decrease)
- 2019 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 760 (15% decrease)
(Elimination of Sunday evening Mass, avg. attendance of 195)

During these 5 years, there was a 39% decline in Mass attendance.

Actual Mass Attendance Trends – Our Lady of Perpetual Help (2015-2019)

- 2015 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 1088
- 2016 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 881 (19% decrease)
- 2017 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 913 (3.6% increase)
- 2018 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 838 (8% decrease)
- 2019 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 889 (6% increase)

During these 5 years, there was an 18% decline in Mass attendance.

Actual Mass Attendance Trends – IC & OLPH Parishes Combined (2015-2019)

- 2015 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 2334
- 2016 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 1861 (20% decrease in 12 mo.)
- 2017 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 1889 (1.5% increase in 12 mo.)
- 2018 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 1733 (8% decrease in 12 mo.)
- 2019 Average Mass Attendance per Month = 1649 (5% decrease in 12 mo.)
(Elimination of Sunday evening Mass, avg. attendance of 195)

During this time, our parishes experienced an overall cumulative decrease of 29% in Mass attendance.

During this same time period, the Archdiocese of Seattle as a whole experienced a decline of 9%.

Forecasted Mass Attendance Trends – IC & OLPH Parishes Combined (2020-2025)

Assumptions:

- COVID has impacted many businesses in our parish boundaries. Many will not recover. Potential negative impact.
- The Boeing Company is struggling and is forecasting to lose thousands of jobs in our area in the foreseeable future. In addition the 787 production line will be moving to South Carolina over the course of several years. There are multiple businesses that

support Boeing directly and indirectly. Current parishioners have already been affected. Potential negative impact.

- The boundaries within our parish’s communities are fairly well built out. There are developments in work that are condo type living which will add to the density. This trend has been going on for several years in the area and we have not seen an uptick in Mass attendance. Neither positive nor negative impact.
- Homelessness, addiction and mental health issues seem to be on the rise in Everett. While it gives us the opportunity to serve, it may also make the area less desirable to some. Potential negative impact.
- Continued growth in housing prices make it difficult for people to move into the area. Potential negative impact.
- The average reduction in attendance over the last 3 years is 5.75%

If the trend stayed constant at 5% (conservative estimate) per year, the 2025 data would look as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 2019 Mass Attendance Actuals | 1649 |
| 2025 Mass Attendance Projected | 1213 |
| Projected Percent Reduction | -21% |

Registered Household Trends

Immaculate Conception Parish

| | <u>2015</u> | <u>2019</u> | <u>Percent Change</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Registered Households | 1494 | 712 | -47% |

*In the last year the number of registered households has been reviewed and updated which has resulted in a significant decline in registered households.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish

| | <u>2015</u> | <u>2019</u> | <u>Percent Change</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Registered Households | 1378 | 970 | -29% |

*In the last year the number of registered households has been reviewed and updated which has resulted in a significant decline in registered households.

Immaculate Conception Parish & Our Lady of Perpetual Help

| | <u>2015</u> | <u>2019</u> | <u>Percent Change</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Registered Households | 2872 | 1682 | -41% |

Please note again, that the 2015 counts are likely inaccurately elevated. In addition, more work was done in achieving better accuracy in the ICP numbers in 2019. In the future, staff expects more reductions in OLPH as more work is accomplished.

Key Findings

Following 2015, when both parishes saw a dramatic decrease in Mass attendees, there has been a steady decline in Mass attendance in our parishes (small exception in one year). There is not a reliable way to determine if this is primary to one or the other parishes due to the cross over that occurs between parishes. Regardless, the trend of Catholics attending Mass North Everett is in decline.

Our downward trending Mass attendance is far greater than the average across the Archdiocese of Seattle. Our parishes saw a decline of 29% while the Archdiocese has seen a decline of 9% over the same time period.

Contributing factors may include:

- Movement of families out of Everett due to housing availability and cost.
- New parishes being opened and expanded in the area.
 - Holy Cross (Lake Stevens, 2004)
 - North American Martyrs (Edmonds, 2008)
 - Saint Mary Magdalen expansion (Everett, 2020)
- Loss of Pastor in 2017/18 timeframe.
- Declining attendance at IC/OLPH School (20% decline in the last 3 years, between 2017/18 and 2019/20 school years).
- Reduction of Mass schedule (Sunday Night).
- Other

When projecting out Mass attendance to 2025, we could conservatively see another 20%+ reduction in Mass attendance without a significant outreach effort to change the trend.

Parish staff has achieved a more accurate assessment of registered households over the last 12-18 months. Based on envelopes sent and number of givers, the number of households is likely still inflated. This data will be further discussed when information on giving and finances are discussed.

Data and projections are never perfect, but they do show trends that provide us a way to look at the past and think about the future. It gives us the opportunity to change what we do in order to get a different result and achieve our mission. This report offers one piece of the puzzle... there is more to consider.

Please keep our parishes in your prayers. Ask that the Holy Spirit will reveal to us the path forward in achieving the mission that Christ has for us.

Blessings...

Duane