

12/4/20

Sacrament Trends at Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parishes

In this Strategic Planning communication we will be looking at the Discipleship element of how we are doing in North Everett. Similar to the last communication, this will be focused specifically on our parishes and I will make some comparison to averages for the Archdiocese of Seattle (where available). As before 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.

In the communication on Mass attendance trends, I called out that the data by parish can be misleading. The same is true with some of this data as well. Anointing of the Sick, Reconciliation, Funerals and Weddings are difficult or impossible to assign to specific parishes. Therefore these numbers have been combined into one data point.

Due to the size of this document, you will find “**Key Findings**” at the beginning of the document.

Key Findings

Sacrament trends are varied and for many of the data elements we lack comparison data. But in most areas, the general downward trend (especially in the last few years) points to the need to address our Missionary Discipleship to ensure a robust community into the future. A brief summary of each is below:

- **Baptisms** have been following a mostly downward trend with the exception of 2018. The overall 5 year trend shows a decline of 44% in Baptisms, while the Archdiocese of Seattle saw a decline of 11%. Baptisms could be closely correlated with the Sacrament of Marriage (see below).
- **First Communions** saw an overall reduction of 1% over the 5 year period. An issue to watch for future 1st Communion trends is the parish’s school enrollment levels. Also, the mix of practicing Catholic, non-practicing Catholics and non-Catholics in the school could affect the future trend and should be studied. In addition, First Communions could be closely correlated with the Sacrament of Marriage (see below).
- **Confirmations** have seen a decline of 6% over the 5 year period and saw a 23% reduction in 2019. The number of Confirmations in 2020 could be larger due to the change in minimum age requirements to receive the Sacrament which changes from High School to Seventh Grade. This spike could also cause declines in follow on years.

- **Anointing of the Sick** occurrences have increased 29%. Prior to 2018, book keeping/recording was not consistent. The assignment of Fr. Altenhofen is also a likely contributors to the increase in 2019.
- **Reconciliations** have seen the biggest increase of all the Sacraments. Over the 5 year period they increased by 59%. In 2018 they increased 41% and in 2019 by 79% over previous year. The likely cause of the increase is the assignment of a Pastor and increased times for Reconciliation by Fr. Altenhofen.
- **Weddings** saw a decrease of 5.5% over the period studied while the Archdiocese of Seattle saw a similar decrease (7%). What is more impactful than the percentages is the actual number of weddings in our parishes (2019 = 17). Historically, the number of Catholics married to non-Catholics far outweighed those between Catholics. Since 1999 these trends reversed so that a majority of marriages performed in our Archdiocese are between Catholics (the Catholic/Catholic numbers have remained fairly static while the Catholic/non-Catholic marriages has gone down considerably). The general trends show that in years where Catholic/non Catholic marriages go up, there is a correlation to increases in adult conversions in the following 2 years. So, this trend in reductions of Catholic/non-Catholic weddings could be negatively impacting adult conversions and ultimately Mass attendance, and other Sacraments.
- **Funerals** decreased by 50%, while the Archdiocese of Seattle saw a 5% decrease. One possible reason could be due to the increase of services at a funeral home and other locations or at the graveside. There has also been some work done by the Associated Catholic Cemeteries that found there could be some correlation to the sacramental practices of the younger generation. If there are not specific instructions left by the deceased, it is not uncommon to leave all planning to the funeral home. Since 1999, in the Archdiocese of Seattle, total deaths have increased by 34%. During this same time Catholic funerals declined by 15%. Death is a moment of great importance to a family and can be a critical moment for evangelization.

In the previously published document on Mass attendance, it was reported that our parishes saw a decline of 29% in attendance at Mass while the Archdiocese has seen a decline of 9% over a similar period. Decreased Mass attendance almost certainly has an impact on these mostly declining trends.

Baptism Trends

Actual Baptisms Trends – Immaculate Conception Parish (2015-2019)

- 2015 Baptisms per year = 75
- 2016 Baptisms per year = 52 (31% decrease)
- 2017 Baptisms per year = 45 (13% decrease)
- 2018 Baptisms per year = 49 (9% increase)

- 2019 Baptisms per year = 50 (2% increase)

During these 5 years, there was a 33% decline in Baptisms.

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

- 2015 Baptisms per year = 61
- 2016 Baptisms per year = 74 (21% increase)
- 2017 Baptisms per year = 25 (66% decrease)
- 2018 Baptisms per year = 50 (100% increase)
- 2019 Baptisms per year = 26 (48% decrease)

During these 5 years, there was a 57% decline in Baptisms.

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

- 2015 Baptisms per year = 136
- 2016 Baptisms per year = 126 (7% decrease)
- 2017 Baptisms per year = 70 (44% decrease)
- 2018 Baptisms per year = 99 (41% increase)
- 2019 Baptisms per year = 76 (23% decrease)

During this time, our parishes experienced an overall cumulative decrease of 44% in Baptisms.

During the similar time period, the Archdiocese of Seattle as a whole experienced a decline of 11%.

First Communion Trends

Actual First Communion Trends – Immaculate Conception Parish (2015-2019)

- 2015 First Communion per year = 70
- 2016 First Communion per year = 58 (17% decrease)
- 2017 First Communion per year = 58 (0% change)
- 2018 First Communion per year = 87 (50% increase)
- 2019 First Communion per year = 66 (6% decrease)

During these 5 years, there was a 6% decline in 1st Communion.

Actual First Communion Trends – Our Lady of Perpetual Help (2015-2019)

- 2015 First Communion per year = 24
- 2016 First Communion per year = 58 (141% increase)
- 2017 First Communion per year = 69 (19% increase)
- 2018 First Communion per year = 28 (60% decrease)
- 2019 First Communion per year = 27 (4% decrease)

During these 5 years, there was an 8% increase in 1st Communions.

Actual First Communion Trends – IC & OLPH Parishes Combined (2015-2019)

- 2015 First Communions per year = 94
- 2016 First Communions per year = 116 (23% increase)
- 2017 First Communions per year = 127 (9% increase)
- 2018 First Communions per year = 115 (12% decrease)
- 2019 First Communions per year = 93 (24% decrease)

During this time, our parishes experienced an overall increase of 1% in First Communions.

At the time of this report, Archdiocese of Seattle data was not available for the similar time period.

Confirmation Trends

Actual Confirmation Trends – Immaculate Conception Parish (2015-2019)

- 2015 Confirmations per year = 35
- 2016 Confirmations per year = 34 (3% decrease)
- 2017 Confirmations per year = 35 (3% increase)
- 2018 Confirmations per year = 44 (28% increase)
- 2019 Confirmations per year = 37 (16% decrease)

During these 5 years, there was a 6% increase in Confirmations.

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

- 2015 Confirmations per year = 31
- 2016 Confirmations per year = 32 (3% increase)
- 2017 Confirmations per year = 46 (44% increase)
- 2018 Confirmations per year = 37 (20% decrease)
- 2019 Confirmations per year = 25 (32% decrease)

During these 5 years, there was a 19% decline in Confirmations.

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

- 2015 Confirmations per year = 66
- 2016 Confirmations per year = 66 (0% change)
- 2017 Confirmations per year = 81 (23% increase)
- 2018 Confirmations per year = 81 (0% increase)
- 2019 Confirmations per year = 62 (23% decrease)

During this time, our parishes experienced an overall cumulative decrease of 6% in Confirmations.

At the time of this report, Archdiocese of Seattle data was not available for the similar time period.

Confirmations that occurred in 2020 are significantly higher due to changes in minimum age for Confirmation in the Archdiocese of Seattle (not included in this report).

Anointing of the Sick

Actual Anointing of the Sick Trends – IC & OLPH Parishes Combined (2015-2019)

- 2015 Anointing of the Sick per year = 332
- 2016 Anointing of the Sick per year = 348 (5% increase)
- 2017 Anointing of the Sick per year = 462 (33% increase)
- 2018 Anointing of the Sick per year = 341 (26% decrease)
- 2019 Anointing of the Sick per year = 427 (25% increase)

During this time, our parishes experienced an overall increase of 29% in Anointing of the Sick.

At the time of this report, Archdiocese of Seattle data was not available for the similar time period.

Reconciliation

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

- 2015 Reconciliations per year = 2560
- 2016 Reconciliations per year = 2580 (.8% increase)
- 2017 Reconciliations per year = 2120 (18% decrease)
- 2018 Reconciliations per year = 2280 (7.5% increase)
- 2019 Reconciliations per year = 4080 (79% increase)

During this time, our parishes experienced an overall cumulative increase of 59% in Reconciliations.

At the time of this report, Archdiocese of Seattle data was not available for the similar time period.

Weddings

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

- 2015 Weddings per year = 18
- 2016 Weddings per year = 46 (155% increase)
- 2017 Weddings per year = 12 (74% decrease)
- 2018 Weddings per year = 20 (67% increase)

- 2019 Weddings per year = 17 (15% decrease)

During this time, our parishes experienced an overall cumulative decrease of 5.5% in Weddings.

During the similar time period, the Archdiocese of Seattle as a whole experienced a decline of 7%

Funerals

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

- 2015 Funerals per year = 36
- 2016 Funerals per year = 55 (53% increase)
- 2017 Funerals per year = 20 (64% decrease)
- 2018 Funerals per year = 36 (80% increase)
- 2019 Funerals per year = 18 (50% decrease)

During this time, our parishes experienced an overall cumulative decrease of 50% in Funerals.

During the similar time period, the Archdiocese of Seattle as a whole experienced a decline of 5%

I hope this review of Sacrament Trends is helpful to you. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. 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