

# Saint Agnes Five Year Report 2019

## Question 2 - What areas of the Parish are in need of **improvement** and **change**?

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- ✦ More social events Missions
  
- ✦ We are an aging parish. We should encourage the young people to participate more. I would like to more of the mix from the Spanish community at our masses. I think that, if possible, we should other speakers/traveling priests, to give sermons or different perspectives. Although I like the music and organ player, I would suggest a more upbeat and modern selection of songs.
  
- ✦ Volunteerism – especially to the young – it seems everyone is interested in Social Justice and we are left scrambling to find help. Parents are working all hours leaving the average age of our volunteers in Faith Formation at 65 – we have 14 volunteers including Marie, Fr. John and myself serving 150 students and 101 families. School building needs maintenance – cleanliness is always an issue. A fresh coat of paint goes a long way – floors need attention. Lighting in the parking lot – security in the evening for an hour while the kids are in class. Especially in today’s world.
  
- ✦ How do we come to better know each other as members of a common St. Agnes \*faith community?  
How do we strengthen our social justice outreach?  
How do we become a “relevant” community for young adults?
  
- ✦ We have a rather old parish so, somehow, we need to attract younger people. I think, if possible, we should a mix of traveling priests, maybe even Deacons to say sermons once a month. The organ, music and singers are good but maybe liven it up with modern religious songs. We have a diverse community. Maybe we can get more Spanish people to come to weekend masses and not only the night Spanish masses.
  
- ✦ Altar servers
  
- ✦ I have always felt that we do not reach the teenagers and maybe it's because we don't seem to get the young parents involved. If the parents don't show any interest in their religion, I don't see how we can expect their children to become involved. Don't know the answer but it does worry me.
  
- ✦ Father Richard has definitely brought out the best in those who attend St. Agnes, but many of the attendees could give more of their resources to St. Agnes for the good causes it supports.
  
- ✦ Would like to see more altar servers at all the Masses.

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- ✦ I will limit my suggestions to two (2) independent areas yet related suggestions. While the Latino parishioners, as I explained above, are currently well served there is much more that would be helpful. Saint Agnes is a unique parish with a large Spanish speaking population and fertile ground for expansion - it has the potential to be a cultural laboratory in our Diocese. The 8 pm Spanish Mass is a great place to start but language, culture and customs tend to segregate the church's congregants - particularly if only Spanish speakers attend that evening Mass. The parish should consider bi-lingual masses and other communal activities - inviting our English speakers to join with our Spanish speakers. Assimilation is important and the children of the Spanish newcomers are important to our continuity as our parish group ages. Even conversational language training might offer a new avenue - and offer inspirational interest - some older parishioners may even be interested in meeting and speaking with our Latino population. Related to that is the need to recognize that technology is embedded in our advancing society and must become a large part of Saint Agnes. A simple website is not enough - email is not enough - we need a pro-active digital approach. For volunteers for example, the addition of online training is not only more convenient, but it is favored by young people - important to our future. Necessary training for parish positions should be available online and the parish should make a special effort through digital outreach to recruit young ushers, Knights of Columbus, Altar servers, trainers and other volunteers - expansion must be active not passive. We must broaden the club and we should use the Spanish digital world in a similar way in an effort to get Spanish ushers, KC members, etc. This again acts as a multiplier of force to assimilate the Spanish community into our broader parish. The Church must make an effort to move forward in a pro-active way to recruit, train and enlarge our Catholic community.
  
- ✦ We are blest to have volunteers who serve on the Parish Council. However, the parishioners themselves are not informed of the agendas nor are minutes issued to the parish community. Better communication would be greatly appreciated.
  
- ✦ We could benefit from the presence of a deacon. I would like to have discussion groups dedicated to our spiritual growth, dialogues in preparation of advent, lent. Discussion regarding the church. Men's Bible Study.
  
- ✦ In need of improvement Nothing significant. Great place to Worship. Great parish.
  
- ✦ The population is aging and will need more support groups, such as a bereavement group.
  
- ✦ I do not feel anything needs to be changed.
  
- ✦ Would like to see better integration with the Spanish community.

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- ✦ We need more involvement of our parishioners; the same people do most of volunteering. We need programs to attract younger parishioners. We need a rectory cook.
- ✦ Changing some mass times 7am to 8am 11am to 12 noon on Sunday
- ✦ Outreach to youth. How do we keep them involved in worship? Involve Hispanic community in the life of the parish.
- ✦ Break down intentional separation of the Hispanic community from the rest of the worship community. Need much more involvement of children in Sunday Masses and especially faith formation students in the Masses they are assigned to. Ongoing lector training. Greater celebration of Our Lady of Guadeloupe involving whole parish Bringing in the first responder community to Mass by publicizing and celebrating the feast day of St. Florian.
- ✦ We need more young families to get involved but this is not just a problem for the church but for the community.
- ✦ It would be nice to see more children/youth attend Mass. While the children have the same second grade teacher in school, one class, the youth generally attend Mass with their parents. The Spanish Mass has many children of all ages. They also have their own band, with music and words passed out to their congregation for all to sing. SR. Margaret plans many activities with them and does invite the rest of the parish to join in the Posada and other activities. Unfortunately, most of the others do not speak Spanish. The parish has a high level of immigrants. CCD director, Ms. Harbes does plan "The Jesse Tree" etc. to be done at Mass and at those times, the youth do respond. AT Easter the children make beautiful crosses with their CCD teacher, Mrs. Wallace. and make a beautiful First Communion, partake of May Crowning etc. In the old days, First Communion students would have baskets of flowers, kiss the petals and be part of the procession at Holy Thursday. (I know it has been many years, but it is a beautiful memory)
- ✦ I feel strongly that we need younger parishioners in order to go forward. Volunteers are the heart of events and ministries. The current demographics of our parish is largely over 65, with many leaving the area for the winter. I believe that the current affordable housing project will benefit our parish by enabling younger families to stay in the area. The only thing we can do is find ways to reach out and draw in our younger families.

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- ✦ Information on this critical time in our Church's history. Such as the Amazon synod, sexual abuse. Thanks for Barron book.
- ✦ \*Faith formation opportunities and activities post-Confirmation: young adults, parents/families, seniors \* More opportunities for interaction between Spanish-speaking and English-speaking parishioners.
- ✦ Having children as altar servers at Saturday and Sunday Masses which would enhance their Catholic education.
- ✦ More opportunities for social interaction ie meetings with other participants in parish programs to get to know one another.
- ✦ More programs needed to appeal to the younger generation, possibly using the parish hall for movie nights, etc. or even retreats for the teenagers to bring them closer to God.
- ✦ Better custodial care and maintenance for the school building. We have groups of children ( as well as some adult groups) using the school regularly. the bathrooms need weekly cleaning, plumbing issues need to be addressed. Repairs such as the broken windows in the school basement need replacement, the leaks that occur after a heavy rain need to be corrected and sweeping and mopping of the entire school need to be done on a regular basis.
- ✦ More youth activities and involvement in Parish life.
- ✦ From my perspective as a need becomes evident or is communicated, it is addressed. Not sure what would need improvement or change.
- ✦ Ecumenism! While it appears that there is some interest and activities that St. Agnes participates in with churches of other denominations in the area (e.g. Summer Bible camp w/St. Peter's)....further expanding both the interest and activities of ecumenism with all local churches and the Greenport synagogue would be wonderful in vitalizing our parish.
- ✦ youth outreach more inclusiveness of our Spanish community.
- ✦ Lectors could be better trained. "Faith comes through hearing." "proclamation"
- ✦ The demographics of Greenport and St. Agnes, as a microcosm of the same community, have changed. Running 4 Masses every weekend during the "summer" cycle of 6 months is extremely taxing on those of us who serve in volunteer ministries like EM's

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and Lectors. Not to mention to toll on our Pastor. We desperately need to move to a 3-Mass schedule year-round.

- ✦ More opportunities to expand prayer life- Prayer Group Prayer Garden Opportunities to discuss faith and reading materials given out at times with other parishioners in welcoming environment.
- ✦ While we are seniors and notice the average age attending Mass, I would like to encourage programs to draw younger people to Church. Maybe some association with Greenport High School like a Newman Club, instituting Folk Mass, or some younger musicians, possibly in the front of Church. I am sure the present age demographic may not support the idea, but it's worth a try.
- ✦ Christmas wreath decorations need to be replaced. New carpeting. Get a paid choral leader.
- ✦ Be more community focused. For example, there was a unity march yesterday and it wasn't mentioned. It wasn't political just asking to unite all peoples.
- ✦ More opportunities for all parishioners to interact with each other, such as weekly after Mass social hours, e.g. coffee and bagels after 10:00 Mass every week, especially in the winter months.
- ✦ Greater effort is needed to bring more young people back into church youth groups altar servers community service projects geared towards the elderly. Church finances should be more controlled by the finance committee instead of the committee just being a rubber stamp for the priest. Find a way to improve parish finances ie the weekly basket and/or donations.
- ✦ I think the Parish has made tremendous improvements in the last 6 years and am not privy to the areas of further improvement.
- ✦ Information for parishioners for when a family member is ill or hospitalized.
- ✦ Physical improvement – all sidewalks, a lay person to lead prayers fifteen minutes before Saturday and Sunday Masses begin.
- ✦ Add singles activities, has aging population.
- ✦ The parish seems to be in good shape.

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- ✦ Celebrant of the Eucharist should alternate sides as he distributes Holy Communion. This could have symbolic value and demonstrate that the celebrant is serving everyone.
- ✦ I think an announcement should be made at the beginning of each Mass advising that we have a "Crying Room" in the back of the Church. I feel many people, especially visitors, do not know this exists. It could be included with the cell phones to be silenced as already said. I don't see a big problem with folks and their children acting out at Mass, but I think it would help to know about the room if they felt the need to leave.
- ✦ Like to see more integration of the Spanish community into the everyday life of the church community.
- ✦ Incorporating the Spanish community with the greater parish community. Involving younger people (parents and youth).
- ✦ New energy and sense of enjoyment and pleasant social engagement from our pastor.
- ✦ Saint Agnes (from my observations) has 3 distinct communities; long-time locals, Latino community, summer community. How are these communities being served separately? How are they interacting together? What can the Parish do to make sure all three are served and welcome; together and separately.