

Summary Report — *Interim Mass Schedule Survey*

Parishes of Neighbors North Catholic Community

BACKGROUND

On April 28, 2018 Bishop Zubik announced that the 188 parishes of the Diocese of Pittsburgh would be organized into 57 groupings. These multi-parish groupings would be led by a single priest administrator.

Among the 57 groupings were the parishes of St. Athanasius, Incarnation of the Lord, Saint Sebastian, and Saint Teresa of Avila, known collectively as “Neighbors North Catholic Community.”

The parish groupings went into effect on October 15, 2018. The Diocese provided a *Transition Manual* for the incoming priest administrators of the groupings. Among the many transition tasks identified, the incoming administrator, working with his clergy team, was responsible for facilitating the development of an interim Mass and confession schedule for the grouping of parishes. This interim Mass schedule, along with the rationale behind it, was submitted to the Diocese for review and approval. The interim Mass schedule was announced the weekend of September 8/9, 2018.

The *Transition Manual* further directed the priest administrators to consult the faithful on the interim Mass and confession schedule within six months of implementation, that is, by April 15, 2019.

To accomplish this consultation, Father Rushofsky, working with his clergy team, designed a survey which was made available on March 22, 2019. The survey was available online on the websites of each of the four parishes in the grouping. In addition, paper surveys were available in the back of the churches. All surveys were due by April 12, 2019. This report summarizes the outcomes of that consultation.

RESPONSES

1065 surveys were returned. Of those, 1022 were complete (96%). The remaining 43 surveys skipped some of the questions in the survey.

PARTICIPATION BY PARISH

Survey respondents were asked to indicate in which parish they were registered.

<i>Parish</i>	#	%
St. Teresa of Avila	353	33.81%
St. Athanasius	327	31.32%
St. Sebastian	311	29.79%
Incarnation of the Lord	53	5.08%
Other	16	1.53%

1. CHURCH ATTENDED

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which church they most often attended for Mass since the interim Mass schedule went into effect on October 15, 2018.

<i>Church</i>	#	%
St. Teresa of Avila	406	38.82%
St. Athanasius	324	30.83%
St. Sebastian	271	25.78%
Incarnation of the Lord	48	4.57%

2. SATISFACTION WITH SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Slightly more than half of those who expressed an opinion were either “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the interim Mass schedule.

<i>Ratings</i>	#	%
Satisfied or Very Satisfied	526	50.58%
Very Unsatisfied or Unsatisfied	290	27.88%
Neutral	209	20.10%

Summary Report — *Interim Mass Schedule Survey* Parishes of Neighbors North Catholic Community

3. SATISFACTION WITH DISTANCE TRAVELED FOR MASS

Because of the close proximity of the four churches, distance traveled is a concern for only a small percentage.

<i>Ratings</i>	#	%
Satisfied or Very Satisfied	851	82.06%
Very Unsatisfied or Unsatisfied	82	7.91%
Neutral	77	7.43%

4. SATISFACTION WITH AVAILABILITY OF PARKING

The majority of respondents are satisfied with the availability of parking.

<i>Ratings</i>	#	%
Satisfied or Very Satisfied	653	62.85%
Very Unsatisfied or Unsatisfied	187	18.00%
Neutral	151	14.53%

While the responses to Question #4 suggests an overall satisfaction with parking, in the comments regarding parking, there were two concerns that were cited several times. Some people remarked that there was not sufficient parking designated for the handicapped. One suggestion was that the entire upper lot at St. Teresa be designated for handicapped parking. A number of comments proposed that there be parking attendants at all of the parking lots to facilitate people getting in and out of the lot.

5. SATISFACTION WITH ACCESSIBILITY

Since such a high percentage of people indicated that accessibility was “not applicable,” there is no clear result to this question. Perhaps the results would have been clearer if the question had been: “*If* accessibility is an issue for you, how satisfied are you?”

<i>Ratings</i>	#	%
Satisfied or Very Satisfied	378	36.42%

Not Applicable	356	34.30%
Very Unsatisfied or Unsatisfied	149	14.35%
Neutral	108	10.40%

As noted above under question number four, comments sought more parking spaces designated for handicapped parking. In addition, a number of comments remarked on the challenge of the number of stairs from the parking lot to the church at St. Sebastian.

6. SATISFACTION WITH HOSPITALITY

The vast majority of people are satisfied with how they are welcomed at church.

<i>Ratings</i>	#	%
Satisfied or Very Satisfied	860	82.85%
Neutral	85	8.19%
Very Unsatisfied or Unsatisfied	74	7.13%

While the vast majority of people are satisfied with the hospitality they receive at the churches, some felt the greeting before Mass was unnecessary. Still others bemoaned the lack of silence before the start of Mass.

Since adequate and appropriate sound amplification is also a consideration for hospitality, it is noted here that a number of comments felt that the sound systems were not adequate, although some commenters remarked that the issue was the priest, deacon or reader not speaking loudly enough.

7. SATISFACTION WITH FINDING A SEAT AT MASS

The vast majority of people are satisfied with finding a seat for Mass.

<i>Ratings</i>	#	%
Satisfied or Very Satisfied	794	76.71%
Very Unsatisfied or Unsatisfied	123	11.88%
Neutral	98	9.47%

Summary Report — *Interim Mass Schedule Survey* Parishes of Neighbors North Catholic Community

Overall people are satisfied with finding a seat at Mass, a number of people requested that the ushers take a more active role in encouraging people to move to the center of the pews to accommodate others. This seems to be especially true at the 4:00 pm Saturday evening Mass and 11:00 am Sunday morning Mass at St. Teresa.

8. SATISFACTION WITH LEAVING THE PARKING AREA AFTER MASS

The majority of people are satisfied with leaving the parking area after Mass.

<i>Ratings</i>	#	%
Satisfied or Very Satisfied	614	59.15%
Neutral	224	21.58%
Very Unsatisfied or Unsatisfied	158	15.22%

A number of comments described the difficulty and safety of exiting the parking lots at both St. Sebastian and St. Teresa. A number of comments suggested that police be present at the exits to improve the flow of traffic and increase safety.

9. SATISFACTION WITH HOW WELL MASS TIMES WORK WITH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHEDULE

Since such a high percentage of people indicated that Mass times in relation to religious education was “not applicable,” there is no clear result to this question. Perhaps the results would have been clearer if the question had been: “*If* your children participate in religious education on Sunday morning, how well do Mass times work in relation to the religious education schedule?”

<i>Ratings</i>	#	%
Not Applicable	348	33.49%
Satisfied or Very Satisfied	280	26.95%
Neutral	125	12.03%
Very Unsatisfied or Unsatisfied	119	11.45%

Although this question relates to a subset of the entire parish population of the four parishes, some of those who are affected by this issue would like to see an additional morning option at St. Sebastian, for example, an 8:00 am Mass.

10. OPTIONS FOR SATURDAY EVENING MASSES

Three options were offered for the times for Saturday Evening Masses. 993 of all respondents (93%) expressed an opinion on this matter.

<i>Option</i>	<i>Schedule</i>	#	%
#2	4:00 pm at St. Teresa 4:00 pm at St. Athanasius 5:00 pm at St. Sebastian	355	35.75%
#3	4:00 pm St. Teresa 5:00 pm St. Sebastian 6:00 pm St. Athanasius	347	34.94%
#1	4:00 pm St. Teresa 4:00 pm St. Sebastian 5:00 pm St. Athanasius	291	29.31%

A number of comments encouraged the option of having two Masses at the 4:00 pm time. Meanwhile, some argued that 6:00 pm is too late for senior citizens who have trouble driving after sunset, while others argued that a 6:00 pm Mass is helpful for people have to work until five o'clock on Saturdays.

11. OPTIONS FOR SUNDAY MASSES

Four options were offered for the times for Sunday Masses. 961 of all respondents (90%) expressed an opinion on this matter.

<i>Option</i>	<i>Schedule</i>	#	%
#4	7:30 am Incarnation 8:00 am St. Teresa 9:00 am St. Athanasius 10:00 am St. Sebastian 11:00 am St. Teresa 12:00 noon St. Athanasius 5:00 pm St. Sebastian	349	36.00%

Summary Report — *Interim Mass Schedule Survey* Parishes of Neighbors North Catholic Community

<i>Option</i>	<i>Schedule</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>%</i>
#3	8:00 am St. Teresa 9:00 am Incarnation 9:00 am St. Athanasius 10:00 am St. Sebastian 11:00 am St. Teresa 12:00 noon St. Athanasius 5:00 pm St. Sebastian	261	27.16%
#1	8:00 am St. Teresa 8:30 am Incarnation 9:00 am St. Athanasius 10:00 am St. Sebastian 11:00 am St. Teresa 12:00 noon St. Athanasius 5:00 pm St. Sebastian	256	26.64%
#2	8:00 am St. Teresa 9:00 am Incarnation 10:00 am St. Sebastian 11:00 am St. Teresa 12:00 noon St. Athanasius 5:00 pm St. Sebastian	98	10.20%

one idea or theme was repeated often enough to be statistically significant.

In addition to the comments integrated into the responses above that related to a specific survey question, the following comments were made on more than one occasion:

- A number of comments remarked on what a difficult job it is to find a Mass schedule that satisfies everyone. These people expressed thanks to the clergy team for doing a good job and made other remarks of appreciation.
- There were a number of requests that the priests in residence (Fathers Innocent and DiPietro) be more routinely included in the rotation of Mass schedules.
- Although the survey did not address the weekday Mass schedule, a number of people requested a morning Mass at a later time such as 8:00, 8:30 or 9:00 am. A couple comments also suggested an evening weekday Mass.
- Several comments regretted the elimination of announcements at Mass.
- A few comments regretted the elimination of eulogies at funeral Masses.
- Several comments requested that the names of the priests and deacons be published in advance alongside the Mass times each week.
- A number of comments remarked on the challenge of only one Mass at Incarnation and that Mass being so early, i.e., 7:30 am Sunday morning.
- There were many individual comments making requests for specific Mass times that reflected the schedules of the parishes before the grouping occurred in October 2018.

12. MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN CHOOSING WHICH MASS TO ATTEND

Mass time was the most important consideration for the majority of respondents.

<i>Consideration</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>%</i>
Mass Time	603	59.94%
Other	166	16.50%
Church Building	158	15.71%
Availability of Parking	79	7.85%

13. OTHER COMMENTS

Overall, the comments were polite and constructive in nature. While 826 survey respondents added comments totally 30, 931 words, no single idea or theme emerged with any prominence. Most comments reflected the specific needs and/or interests of the respondent. Thus, while a summary of repeated comments is provided below for the sake of completeness in summarizing the survey results, no