

On the weekend of January 19 and 20, 2019, we offered an in-pew anonymous questionnaire about liturgical practices at the Basilica during the homily at each of the three English Masses: the Saturday 5:30 pm Vigil Mass, the Sunday 9:00 am simple *Novus Ordo* Mass, and the Sunday 11:30 am sung *Novus Ordo* Mass. Because there was no *Missa Cantata* that Sunday, we offered the survey once more the following Sunday, January 27, only at the 5pm *Missa Cantata* in the ancient form. At each Mass, attendees were given about 5 minutes to fill out the questionnaire and turn it in at Mass, and they were instructed to turn in only one questionnaire per person. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine how people are receiving the liturgical catechesis and practices that are being offered at the Basilica. The answer is that the overwhelming majority of regular parishioners stated that they were familiar with our catechesis on liturgical matters and were aware of the situation of our multilingual community.

The opportunity for the survey was not announced in advance. It was a regular weekend, 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, which happened to be a three-day weekend for the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, as well as the March for Life in Washington, D. C.. Therefore, some regular attendees were traveling and absent.

On January 19-20, 415 surveys were submitted at the three English Masses. The following Sunday, an additional 25 surveys were collected at the *Missa Cantata* from those who were not present the previous weekend, for a **total of 440 surveys**, representing about **68% of the typical attendance of 650** English-speakers. Note that children under the age of 12, who form a significant (though uncalculated) portion of the typical 650 attendees, were asked not to complete the survey. Therefore, the response of 440 represents a much higher actual proportion of interest and participation among the Basilica parishioners, as well as the visitors in attendance.

The questions were divided into categories including:

- **Direction of Worship: *Ad orientem* / *Versus populum***
- **Incense**
- **Multilingual Considerations**
- **Use of Latin in the Sung Ordinary of the Mass**
- **Greeting and Sign of Peace**
- **Altar Rail and Reception of Holy Communion**
- **The *Novus Ordo* (“New Order” following the 2nd Vatican Council) and the Ancient Form Mass**

In addition to the 35 questions about liturgical practices, people were asked to identify themselves as members of various demographic segments, and they identified themselves as follows:

Visitors (11%), Regular attendees (66%), Supporters of the parish via time, talent, and/or treasure (42%)

Mass time(s) attended: 5:30 (19%), 9:00 (46%), 11:30 (55%), Missa Cantata (18%)

Age group: 12-17 (8%), 18-29 (22%), 30-44 (18%), 45-59 (21%), 60 and up (18%) Male (32%); Female (33%)


In summary, the questionnaire results show tremendous unity among Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul attendees in the *appreciation* for traditional liturgical practices, even as they might not all choose to practice them exclusively. Even our visitors (over 11% of the total responses) expressed practically the same appreciation for the traditional practices that our regular parishioners enjoy. The following snapshot is the overall response, including regular parishioners and visitors, of all categories, and at all of our Mass times.

- **7 in 10** prefer the *ad orientem* posture, while only **2 in 10** prefer *versus populum*. Nearly **9 in 10** appreciate *ad orientem*.
- Almost **90%** expressed appreciation of our use of incense. Only **7%** said that it causes them health problems.
- **84%** appreciate the use of Latin to unify our worshipping community, enabling us to pray with one voice. Fewer than **1 in 5** prefer a Mass that includes only English.
- **83%** appreciate the opportunity to receive Holy Communion kneeling at the altar rail.
- **3 out of 5** prefer to receive Holy Communion on the tongue.

Topics that show the most variety of opinion among those surveyed include the Sign of Peace, the desire to receive from the Chalice, and the preference for the *Novus Ordo* or the ancient form of the Roman rite. There was no clear majority on any of these topics.

Demographic groups *not* examined in this study include Spanish Mass attendees (the survey was in English), converts to Catholicism vs. “cradle Catholics”, those who have moved to Chattanooga from other areas, the distance traveled to attend the Basilica, and the number of years of attendance. Perhaps they can be addressed in a future survey.

We see more unity in preference and understanding across the Mass times than we might have expected, which would indicate that we may have missed the mark on our Mass time adjustments. Arguments that the parish is divided are gravely exaggerated. In fact, we discovered that we are more unified than ever! We are united by the Joy of Tradition! In the next few weeks, I would like to take the opportunity in the Pastor's Notes to present the results of this survey and the analysis of the data in order to shape our Strategic Plan for the coming years.



 Rev. J. David Carter, JCL, Pastor and Rector