

This next installment in the series on our Liturgical Questionnaire involves an examination of our Mass schedule and format. In particular, it is an assessment of our recent adjustment of the Mass formats that were made in December, in which only the 11:30 Mass retained the more traditional elements of *ad orientem*, incense, and Latin. As I note below, we may have gotten that backwards.

The Novus Ordo and the Ancient Form Mass

This group of questions presented opportunities to express preference for one particular form over another for their weekly Sunday Mass. Note that the options were not offered mutually exclusively, and thus people were able to choose more than one preference. The list below is ranked from the form that received the *most affirmation* to the *least affirmation*:

1. **Preference for the sung Novus Ordo Mass celebrated with traditional elements (*ad orientem*, incense, traditional music, Gregorian chant) rather than the *Missa Cantata* in the ancient form**
59% agreement from those who support the parish with time, talent, or treasure; 52% overall agreement; 64% agreement among 11:30 Mass attendees, 44% from 5:30 & 9:00 Mass attendees, 40% agreement from *Missa Cantata* attendees
2. **Preference for the Missa Cantata in the ancient form above other forms**
38% overall agree; 87% agreement among *Missa Cantata* attendees; only 41% agreement among 11:30 Mass attendees. The least agreement comes from the older population (ages 45 and up) and those who attend the Saturday 5:30 Mass (18% for both of these groups)
3. **Preference for the simple Novus Ordo celebrated without traditional elements (i.e., the current format of the 5:30 and 9:00 Masses)**
31% overall agree, with no clear majority of any segment preferring this form, even the 5:30 and 9:00 Masses (43% and 46%)
4. **Preference for the Low Mass in the ancient form (without music) every Sunday, regardless of the time of day, over the sung Novus Ordo Mass celebrated with traditional elements**
20% overall. This preference is highest among those who attend the *Missa Cantata*, yet only 41% of them prefer the Low Mass to sung *Novus Ordo*. The only age group who prefers the Low Mass more than the overall 20% is ages 18-29 (28%).

This category of questions about preference for the form of Mass generated many more write-in comments than any other category: 70 comments total, representing nearly one third of all 231 comments (of the 14 categories that were identified). The majority of these write-in comments (44 comments, i.e., 63% of the comments in this category and 19% of all write-in comments) express a strong desire to attend the ancient form more often, especially the *Missa Cantata*. It is clear there are many who are passionate about their desire to attend the *Missa Cantata*. Some comments indicated that people truly appreciate different forms and have difficulty choosing or are unsure.

Question 34, which stated, “**The primary reason I do not attend the *Missa Cantata* is because it is offered at an inconvenient time; i.e., I would attend it if it were offered weekly in the morning,**” was difficult to answer for those who *do* attend it despite the time of day, as several people commented. Even so, 36% overall agreed that the time is inconvenient, which is nearly *double* the 18% of respondents who reported that they attend the *Missa Cantata* currently. This difference, coupled with the 38% who say they would attend it if it were offered weekly, suggests that there is an interest in expanding the *Missa Cantata* offerings.

It should be noted that the Basilica's current offerings for English-speaking attendees are *inversely* proportional to the expressed preferences among those surveyed.

- Two of the Basilica's three Sunday Masses (67% of the Masses offered for English speakers) are the **simple Novus Ordo without traditional elements**, which is preferred by only 31% of those surveyed.
- Only one of the Basilica's three Sunday Masses (33% of the Masses offered for English speakers) is the **sung Novus Ordo with traditional elements (*ad orientem*, incense, traditional music, Gregorian chant)**, which is preferred over the *Missa Cantata* by 52% of those surveyed and 59% of those who support the parish with time, talent, or treasure.
- The **monthly *Missa Cantata* in the ancient form** is offered the least often (comprising only 8% of the Sunday Masses offered for English speakers during the year), though it is indicated as the Sunday Mass of preference by 38% of those surveyed.

Surely these results will aid us in our future strategic planning. As we look to the future, we will not be adding Masses in this parish, nor would I imagine other parishes doing so. Rather, the trend will be to combine and reduce, due to a shortage of priests to offer these Masses.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,



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