

In this seventh and last installment to conclude our results from the recent liturgical questionnaire, we turn to the write-in comments that were not addressed in the previous sections. They express a wide range of opinions on different matters but are good for our analysis. On the whole, there were a lot more positive comments than negative.

Additional Write-In Comments

The 231 write-in comments were largely tied to the categories of questions that were presented, and those have been explained in the previous installments. However, there were 46 additional comments, representing 20% of all comments, that were either general or specific to a topic that was not covered in the questions. These comments have been broadly categorized as follows:

- Tradition (Affirmation): 14 comments, 6% of the total comments received
Gratitude for the traditional aspects of the liturgy offered at the Basilica; appreciation for the reverence of worship at the Basilica
- Tradition (Critique): 5 comments, 2% of the total comments received
Request for more modern practices to engage the youth; dislike of sung petitions and other sung prayers
- Other (Affirmation): 11 comments, 5% of the total comments received
Gratitude for the beautiful sanctuary; appreciation for the efforts of the priests, opportunities for catechesis and for the questionnaire itself, and for the fiscal soundness of the parish
- Other (Critique): 11 comments, 5% of the total comments received
Disappointment over the echo in the renovated sanctuary; dissent regarding the deference to the rubrics; preference for brevity; request for catechesis on holy silence in the church; elimination of pulpit announcements; dislike for having ushers guide people at Communion
- Other (Neutral): 5 comments, 2% of the total comments received
Individuals reporting where they live, what other parish they attend; general statements of Catholic belief (not liturgically-specific)

Basilica Supporters

After completing our internal analysis, which yielded the breakdown of answers to each question and from each segment of our Basilica population, and which I have presented to you thus far, we submitted the questionnaire data to an independent analyst for review. The analyst determined that overall, there is great unity in the parish concerning the vast majority of things. Also, in most cases, the differences in responses to questions were not largely predictable from the various segments of the population (age, gender, or the choice of Mass time).

However, the analyst delved deeper to analyze the responses from those who identified themselves as *supporters* of the parish with time, talent, and/or treasure. It turns out that there are a few factors that are the best indicator that someone is a supporter of the parish.: Those who attend the *Missa Cantata* are 3 times more likely to identify themselves as supporters of the parish, compared with those who do not attend the *Missa Cantata*. Other key unifying characteristics of supporters include appreciation for the *ad orientem* posture, support for the reception of Holy Communion kneeling, and preference for receiving Holy Communion on the tongue. Our supporters are also unified in mostly preferring the sung *Novus Ordo* celebrated with traditional elements rather than the Low Mass in the ancient form (without music) every Sunday.

The question by question responses from our parish supporters do suggest that those who are invested in our parish have an enhanced appreciation for the more traditional elements of the liturgy (such as *ad orientem*, incense, Latin, and Gregorian chant, and the sung Mass in the ancient form), as compared with those who do not identify themselves as supporters.

Conclusion

Now that we have completed the analysis of this liturgical questionnaire, we will use the data and its results in our further strategic planning for our parish. There are many things that we will have to consider in the years to come, as our congregation grows but our priestly support is diminished. Priests are torn in so many different ways, that we may eventually have to reconsider our Mass schedule to reduce the number of Masses every Sunday, due to the limitation of priests. We also can take this information to highlight the joy of the traditional practices of faith that we celebrate here and to advertise more what we are doing and how we are doing it, with intentionality. The most encouraging result from this process has been the confirmation of our unity as a parish. Saints Peter and Paul enjoys an uncharacteristically unified group of people, dedicated to Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, orthodoxy in faith, and appreciation for the expressions of faith handed on to us through the many centuries of Christianity. This is something that must be treasured, cultivated, and cared for, as well as shared with joy, welcome, and personal invitation. We have to battle any false stereotypes that people who appreciate traditional things are cold, unwelcoming, or unfriendly. I don't think that is the impression most people get when coming through our doors, thanks be to God, but it's up to us to keep it that way.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,



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