



Continuing the Legacy of Faith at St. John the Baptist Re-Assessment Survey of Capital Campaign Response to Areas of Concern Expressed by Those Surveyed

I. RESULTS (FROM THE PERSONAL INTERVIEWS & MAIL SURVEYS)

(Please note that not every question was answered by every respondent)

Demographic Information:

Each interview & mail survey began with a series of demographics questions, asking parishioners about their involvement & feelings about Saint John the Baptist.

Of the families responding, we interviewed or surveyed families employed in the fields of Accounting, Administration, Banking, Business, Construction, Education, Engineering, Government, Homemakers, Human Resources, Law Enforcement, Legal, Management, Medical, Parish Staff, Real Estate, Sales, Service Industries & Technology as well as retirees from various fields.

1. How long have you been a member of Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church? (Interview question #1 / Survey question #1)

From those Surveyed

40+ years 16%
21 to 39 years **23%**
11 to 20 years 22%
6 to 10 years 17%
1 to 5 years 17%
< 1 year 4%
No response 1%

Actual Breakdown in Parish Records*

Not available in our system, only automated in 2007
Not available in our system, only automated in 2007
Over 9 years 4.89%
5 – 9 years 48.52%
1 – 5 years 41.19%
< 1 year 5.41%

**Note: Because our parishioner data was computerized only a few years ago, we do not have the necessary information to fully match the categories used in the survey.*

2. What ministries, programs &/or activities are you involved with? (Interview question #2 / Survey question #2)

Of the 230 households who participated in the Assessment, 67% indicated their involvement in a wide array of parish ministries, programs & activities.

The responses from Assessment respondents provided us with an excellent cross-section of the parish. The ministries, programs & activities that were mentioned include:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Altar Servers | <input type="checkbox"/> Altar Society | <input type="checkbox"/> Baptism Preparation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bereavement Committees | <input type="checkbox"/> Boy/Cub Scouts | <input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast on Friday's |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Catechists | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Liturgy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choir | <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee Club | <input type="checkbox"/> Eucharistic Minister |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance Council | <input type="checkbox"/> Handmaidens of the Lord | <input type="checkbox"/> Homebound Visitations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Knights of Columbus | <input type="checkbox"/> Lector/Commentators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legion of Mary | <input type="checkbox"/> March for Life | <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Club |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money Counter | <input type="checkbox"/> Office Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RCIA | <input type="checkbox"/> Relay Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ushers | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation Bible School | <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry | |

3. In your opinion, what does the parish do well? (Interview question #3 / Survey question #3)

The most common responses to this question overwhelmingly referred to:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The true teachings of the Catholic faith | <input type="checkbox"/> Fr. Bayhi's leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> The friendly staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The friendly & welcoming community | | |

Representative Commentary Relative to Item 3 Above:

- ☐ Just love the parish; the people here are so wonderful. Think they reach out to people & make people feel accepted.
- ☐ We appreciate Fr. Jeff's leadership. He is reverent & follows the teachings in the church. Think Father holds parish together. His homilies are orthodox.
- ☐ The congregation is very kind & welcoming. It's a wonderful group of people.
- ☐ Has good presence in Zachary. 20 years ago the community was more prominent Baptist. We have a good identity in the community & are excited to have the new church visible from Main, which will expand our exposure as Catholics.
- ☐ Open to new parishioners, makes them feel worthy. People really like Fr. Jeff & his commitment to making it a better parish.
- ☐ Standing true to the church teachings!
- ☐ We have a tremendous men's group.
- ☐ Financial help to needy. Guidance to anybody, children & adult, that needs direction to their lives. Father Jeff is a blessing to the parish; he will give his last dollar to help anybody.
- ☐ Church services, parish office is helpful & very responsive.
- ☐ Spiritual Ministries.
- ☐ Overall wonderful. We are well pleased with our pastor & staff.
- ☐ Many things, very good altar society & men's club. Fr. Bayhi is great with getting replacements & I think it wonderful we get so many diverse opinions from the visiting priests.
- ☐ Father Bayhi delivers a powerful homily. Easter Egg hunt is very nice.
- ☐ Teaching is Catholic, doesn't leave you in doubt about what the church's position is on things. Like the way they minister to the sick.
- ☐ RCIA program, Mass offerings & CCD.
- ☐ Showing respect to the Eucharist. Our priest.
- ☐ Take care of the parishioners.

4. In your opinion, where does the parish need to improve? (Interview question #4 / Survey-#4)

Note: Throughout Section 4 we have attempted to address each concern, either clarifying what may be misunderstood, stating what measures are or soon will be in place to remedy any deficiencies, or calling upon the parish family to help us better meet the needs of all parishioners. This section is ever-changing.

The most common responses to this question were:

☐ Activities for the Youth

We currently have a Youth Ministry Director who is employed for 15 hours per week. We have struggled to develop a program that is both exciting & entertaining in the eyes of today's youth, while meeting our primary objective of further forming our young people to become committed adult Catholics. We have been most successful [last year] in bringing almost two-dozen young people on a week-long pilgrimage to the March for Life in Washington, DC, through which they learned more about the teachings of the church, social interaction, even history! The amazing growth in each teen, from the beginning of the journey until the day we returned them to their parents, was indescribable. A majority of those pilgrims returned with the drive to defend God's will, preserving the dignity of life from birth until natural death. Those same young Catholics, our "Lifers," have served the parish proudly, as ambassadors, greeters, servers, etc., for two major events: Re-Living Cana Marriage Renewal in February, & the Fortnight of Freedom community forum held on the Feast of St. John the Baptist.

Our resources have been limited for some time. We intended to expand this program, providing additional hours for the coordinator, as well as additional support services & resources. We need your help though. We are asking parents to come together in support of all the activities already in place, & to help us create new programs & activities to attract our young people. If you are interested in serving on a working advisory board to help develop a long-range youth ministry plan, please contact the parish office. If you can offer support by being available for youth

ministry events, please do so. In order to grow & manage a successful program, we not only need the commitment of the youth, we also need the commitment of the entire family.

□ **More social activities for the church family**

We hope to continue to add more social events for all parishioners, young & old. We encourage everyone to read the Guidebook, which we print & distribute every March, for the many programs & services we currently have in place, & we invite input as to what else we need to do. At present, we have twenty-three programs in place, one of which might be a perfect match for you!

Earlier this year, we hosted one of the most successful events ever: Re-Living Cana—Marriage Renewal Weekend, which culminated in the renewal of Wedding Vows for 226 people. This program is also being planned for 2013. We hosted a Family Fun Day at St. John on Sunday, October 21st, during which time parishioners gathered to enjoy an afternoon of food, family & fun. The event was not very well attended, however, we still plan to host similar events in the future, hopefully semi-annually, if not quarterly. We need help from parishioners to plan themes & programming so please contact the parish office if this could be your ministry.

What else should we do? Please contact the parish office with any ideas you have &, by all means, please step forward if you can help us execute some of these ideas.

□ **More ministry opportunities at night or on weekends for those with full-time Jobs**

Just this Summer, we launched a new Bible Study program that has sessions in the morning & in the evening. This program, the Charismatic Prayer Group, & RCIA are the only programs in place after the typical work day. We are seeking a committee of three persons to develop a plan for “after hours” programs in three age groups: 1) *Teen Youth*, 2) *The Thirty-Something Crowd*, & 3) *Seniors/Retirees/Newly Widowed or Divorced*. In addition, in the areas of mental health & wellness, we are also attempting to provide closed meetings to the general public who suffer from chemical addiction through Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous

□ **More continuing education opportunities for adults**

As many of you know, we have hosted, for the last few years, a six-week mission series during Lent, that begins with various prayers, Eucharistic Adoration, & a brief talk by Father Bayhi or any number of guest priests, discussing a range of topics from marriage in the church, to contraception, to the new translation of the Roman Missal, & more. A free Lenten meal was served following each program. In February, 2013, in addition to our regular Friday night meetings during Lent, we also hosted a week-long mission program with world-renowned Sr. Briege McKenna & Fr. Kevin Scallon. Fr. & Sr. provide retreats worldwide to lay persons, priests & religious, & we were fortunate to have them commit a week to local Catholics. As an aside, a number of healings (spiritual & physical) were reported to the parish office after the retreat.

RCIA (the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults), while it is typically provided as a resource for non-Catholics wishing to enter the Roman Catholic Church, is also available to Catholics who would like clarification of the teachings of the church or, simply to have a better understanding of Christ’s teachings. This program continues from early Fall through the Easter Vigil, every Thursday night in the Parish Hall at 7:00 PM. RCIA is open to anyone wishing to strengthen their faith life.

While we do not always have all the resources necessary to provide more programs at St. John, we try to keep the faithful informed of the many programs available throughout the diocese & archdiocese, through our weekly bulletin & website.

Representative Commentary Relative to Item 4 Above:

**Note: In section 3 above, surveys indicated what the parish is already be doing right, those individual items of commentary needed no response. However, in this section we have attempted to address the*

concerns or criticisms listed in order to show that we truly care about what matters most to our parish family. Answers are not absolute and some concerns may not yet be addressed, however, we will keep the congregation informed as we make progress.

☐ **Needs to be a little more social.**

This item addressed above, however, we are open to input & involvement from all.

☐ **Needs to do things with & for the youth to make them feel welcome...not like they are doing everything wrong.**

This item was detailed in "most common responses" above.

☐ **The facilities.**

While we are limited in what we have to work with regarding our current physical plant, we do our best to meet the needs of all existing programs. Our church & adjoining buildings are nearly 40-years old & there are limitations, however, once we open our new worship space, we must work together as a congregation to develop a plan for the existing facilities & how they can best meet our future needs.

☐ **Youth activities from Kindergarten to High School.**

This item was detailed in "most common responses" above.

☐ **Funerals need a place for visitation & talking.**

It is customary for "wakes," as they are commonly referred, to be held in funeral homes. However, at the request of family members we have agreed to allow visitation at St. John the Baptist. The challenge is that, in our main Sanctuary, the Blessed Sacrament is always present. Therefore, we cannot allow traditional visitation of family & friends. We have offered alternate arrangements for those families who wish to have visitation on church grounds but we are limited to the Parish Hall or the Parish Activity Center (the gym). We believe this allows family & friends to freely interact under obviously difficult circumstances, without disturbing the Sanctity of our worship space. We are limited in what we can offer families until such time as we build a new church. The plan for the current Sanctuary is to serve as an assembly hall, complete with stage, seating, lighting & sound, which could host any number of events, including funeral visitations, concerts, educational events, community meetings & more.

☐ **More Catholic bible studies & things like that, adult bible study.**

This item was detailed in "most common responses" above.

☐ **We need a parish fair. It created a great deal of community.**

We would like nothing more than to host such large events as a parish fair. Such a concept is a major undertaking & we simply cannot provide the manpower needed with limited staff in the parish office & the office of Religious Education & Youth Ministry. We welcome the ideas of all who believe such projects are possible however, we need your commitment to the time, talent & funding necessary to make these visions a reality. We need parishioners from all generations to join together to make this happen.

☐ **The website needs improving. It needs to be simplified as it is difficult to navigate.**

The website is managed in-house & began as a gift to the parish during the time that Father Kenny Laird was pastor. While it could certainly be improved, the skills to do so simply are not possible in-house. We have investigated contracting with outside resources, some of which required an initial investment of more than \$10,000.00. Given that we work with limited staff & with a limited budget, it was decided that we will continue to manage the website to the best of our ability, until such time as someone steps forward with the talent & resources to take the project over. All are welcome!

☐ **Add more updated music &/or get local youth to do music ministry monthly to involve them.**

We are eager to meet the desires of the congregation, while remaining focused on the Liturgical correctness of any music performed during the Mass. Please offer your suggestions to the choir directors, Molly Capone & David Belgard, or to the parish office, all of whom are willing to take suggestions. As always, we invite all parishioners, young & old, to join the choir, as music has always been known to be a form of prayer in the Catholic Church. Regarding a "Praise & Worship" type musical ensemble &/or youth/teen Mass, we invite any men or women from the parish family to take charge as youth music ministry leader(s), helping us to develop a strong presence among our young people.

☐ **Strong PA system.**

We are confined to the existing system & components until we build a new church.

☐ **More involvement/opportunities for teens, social & spiritual.**

This item was detailed in "most common responses" above.

☐ **Needs more comfortable pews & kneelers & better area for the handicapped.**

Again, we are limited to the appointments & configuration of the existing facility.

☐ **Events for young people. We are always being compared to the Baptist church!**

Please know that, while we are truly doing our best (as described above) to develop new programs that are engaging & interesting to our young people, we also encourage them to socialize with all people of faith; but that's just the social part. As true Catholics, we can never substitute the Eucharist—***the true Body & Blood & Soul & Divinity of our Lord***—with any other non-Catholic church service or program. To suggest to a young person that they can "get the same thing or more" at a non-catholic assembly is not only untrue—it is irresponsible on the part of the church & all who help to form these young minds. We ask every family to prayerfully work toward a solution that meets the faith formation needs of every young Catholic, while balancing social interaction needs, something that we agree is very important with such an impressionable group. Let's keep our kids in church; together, we can meet all their other needs.

☐ **Youth Mission Trips.**

This is an area in which we have been lacking in the last few years, with the exception of the annual March for Life. It is agreed that we need to do more & we encourage ideas from all parents & youth. We need parents & families to step forward with ideas & energy, & help us build the infrastructure to make mission trips recurring events.

☐ **Opportunities for parents to be involved with the youth's Catholic education.**

By all means! We advertise for several months each year, asking for involvement from the congregation in both religious education & youth ministry. Because we are responsible for more than 500 young people through our CCD program, we are *always* in need of parents—& even older siblings—to help us provide for the faith formation of all our kids. Please contact the office of Religious Education. You'll never be turned away!

☐ **Training of Altar Servers, cry room & communion rail.**

This item was unclear, however, we will attempt to address each point. Training for new Altar Servers is scheduled approximately once a year. During this time, those who already serve are invited for re-training. These are young people & they give of themselves to our Lord each time they stand on the Altar. We must pray for continued guidance from the Holy Spirit & be thankful that they have stepped forward to serve in this ministry. Regarding a cry room, again, we are limited to the confines of our existing facility. Please note, however, that a cry room is *never* to be perceived as a play room & that *all* children should be taught to behave properly in the presence of our Lord. A Communion Rail is not possible in our existing facility.

□ **Nursing home residents need to be visited more often by parishioners & priest.**

As you know, St. John the Baptist has only one priest & no deacons. While we do our best to meet the needs of the parish family first, we are also responsible for a prison, a hospital, three nursing homes, a War Veterans Home with 93 Catholics, an assisted living facility with 23 Catholics, & more than 1,200 families. It is not easy to visit every homebound, shut-in, or otherwise incapacitated parishioner with great frequency. We do attempt to arrange as many visits as possible throughout the year &, on occasions where we have visiting priests, we schedule as many off-site Masses, anointing & visits as possible. Further, our homebound ministry team of 14 volunteers, as well as our three sisters, provide excellent support in cases where a priest cannot be present. Holy Communion, prayer & fellowship are provided at least weekly by one team or the other. We also must know about those who are hospitalized or shut-in. Please contact the parish office if you or a family member would like visitation, Holy Communion or Viaticum. No one is ever denied such requests.

Additional Facts For Your Consideration:

Our parish, as of 7/10/13, has **1395 families**, & a total of 3,942 individuals (*187 families are from OLA*).

The average number of Identified contributions per weekly collection is from **214 families**

We have approximately **1,000** persons at the three weekend Masses—the Obligation for all Catholics

We have approximately **160** children & teens at the three weekend Masses, with **500 registered in CCD**

What can our church do for us? Perhaps we must also ask, what can we do for our church?

To get involved and to be a part of the solution, please read our Guidebook, the bulletin, and visit our website often: www.sjb-ola.org St. John offers much more than you may think and there is much more to being Catholic than simply participating in the Mass for an hour on Sunday. We hope to see you soon!

City Breakdown

