

May 2, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you! In November of 2010, we launched an exploratory mission through our Parish Survey Questionnaire. This optional survey was a diocesan survey that was available to all parishes. Dr. Michael Roemer and I customized it to fit the particular circumstances St. Francis of Assisi University Parish and Newman Center and introduced it on the first weekend of Advent. Encouraging each person present at Mass to take one home, we also made them available on the website for those who could not attend Mass, for whatever reason, during the six-week period they could be completed before the due date of (who could forget?) January 9th.

In all, we received a total of 264 surveys, the results of which are contained within these pages. Taken as a whole, the survey responses were very positive. As you know, the survey consisted of two parts, the first asking participants to circle their responses, and the second part left room for additional comments. There were almost 400 written comments, not all of which could be printed in this final report due to the confidentiality of the comments or to the possibility that its author would not remain anonymous. Before the final edit, compiled by a volunteer and completed by Dr. Roemer, I did read, at least twice, each comment from all 264 surveys. I can assure you that, regardless of the nature of your comment, you were heard.

What has happened so far? After professional compilation by parishioners Drs. Roemer and Kianre Eouanzoui, we presented the results to the Parish Council for their comments and suggestions. This was then followed by the addition of Pastor Responses to each survey question results and many of the individual written comments. It would have been somewhat repetitive and overly tedious to respond to each and every written comment, though each was read.

Where do we go from here? The survey contains helpful perspectives and suggestions that will assist us as we continue to grow as a parish and evolve according to the needs of our times, while at the same time remaining grounded and current in the tradition of our Catholic Faith. Rather than create too many new ministries and programs, though some are clearly needed, we will be using the data to help us improve upon what we are already doing. I see the Parish Council and the AFFT (Adult Faith Formation Team) as being the major facilitators of this evolution. As you may have noticed, they have already creatively responded to certain ideas that came through the parish survey process, such as CAFE (Catholic Adult Faith Education) on Sunday mornings. Each ministry in the parish will have the opportunity to seek how they can do what they do, even better, through the AFFT and Parish Council.

In the end, what was the point of all this? It was to help us work together to continue building a stronger parish community. Upon learning about the diocesan survey, I became very interested in the idea of conducting one here at St. Francis. I had heard feedback about my ministry from a number of sources, but I really wanted to know what people thought of the parish and how it was changing under new leadership. By doing so, I would have a tangible resource with which to plot a course for the short-term as well as the long-term. That, I intend to continue doing with the help of our staff and parish lay leaders.

I thank you for your time and effort in filling out the survey. I thank you for your patience in waiting for its presentation. I thank you for your love of God and this parish.

May God bless you. St. Francis... pray for us!

In Christ,

Rev. Christopher J. Weldon
Pastor

St. Francis of Assisi 2010 Parish Survey Results

This document includes both statistical data and a summary of the qualitative responses (comments) from the confidential and anonymous 264 surveys that were turned in to the parish during the 2010-2011 Advent Season. Section One includes statistical results from all of the 45 questions. Section Two includes the qualitative section and is organized by theme or topic and is an abbreviated list of the nearly 400 comments we received. To conserve space and to protect the anonymity of many who commented, not all comments are listed here (though, *Father Weldon has read all of the comments more than once*).

Section One: Frequencies

This section reveals the numbers, or frequencies, and percentages reflecting how individuals responded to each question. Each also includes a brief comment from Fr. Weldon based on parishioners' responses.

How to "read" the data:

The Frequency is the actual number of individuals who selected each response on the survey (e.g., #1: 150 people circled "Don't Know", 21 people circled "Strongly Disagree", etc.).

The Percent is the percentage of individuals who circled that response based on the total of all respondents in the survey (e.g., #1: $150 / 264 = 56.8\%$).

Missing Response indicates individuals out of the 264 who did *not* respond to that question.

1. An organized welcome program exists for new parish members.

Fr. Weldon's comment: This is a program that has already passed through the AFFT and Parish Council. The only reason it is not yet in place is because Mike Roemer, who had a sincere desire to facilitate it, has been working on this survey. I'm sure once this process is done, he'll be able to get back to work on the Welcome Ministry, and would appreciate some volunteers.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	150	56.8
Strongly Disagree	21	8.0
Disagree	40	15.2
Agree	34	12.9
Strongly Agree	15	5.7
Missing response	4	1.5
Total	264	100.0

2. I feel close (e.g., as friends, companions, etc.) to at least a few other parishioners at our parish.

Fr. Weldon's comment: Most people either agreed or strongly agreed, which shows there is a good sense of community within the larger community. This is something we can never be satisfied with, however. Community can never be strong enough.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	2	.8
Strongly Disagree	4	1.5
Disagree	14	5.3
Agree	93	35.2
Strongly Agree	148	56.1
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

****NOTE: #3 & 4 were not included in the survey (it skipped from 2 to 5)**

5. I feel I am made aware of the social teachings of the Catholic faith through homilies.

Fr. Weldon's comment: Very few disagreed here. The diversity of social teachings is vast, and I do try, as the readings prompt, to engage those social issues and pastorally as possible.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	5	1.9
Strongly Disagree	2	.8
Disagree	14	5.3
Agree	136	51.5
Strongly Agree	104	39.4
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

6. I feel I am made aware of the social teachings of the Catholic faith through various educational opportunities offered through our parish (e.g., workshops, parish missions, conferences, etc.).

Fr. Weldon's comment: And you will see more of these as time continues.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	43	16.3
Strongly Disagree	2	.8
Disagree	26	9.8
Agree	146	55.3
Strongly Agree	42	15.9
Missing response	5	1.9
Total	264	100.0

7. I feel that St. Francis offers opportunities for me to grow as a Catholic.

Fr. Weldon's comment: This was an encouraging response, and one that I desire as well. Whether Pastor or occasional Mass attendee, my hope is that all people can find some aspect of St. Francis that helps them to grow in their Catholic Faith.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	3	1.1
Strongly Disagree	2	.8
Disagree	14	5.3
Agree	154	58.3
Strongly Agree	87	33.0
Missing response	4	1.5
Total	264	100.0

8. I feel that St. Francis offers opportunities for me to grow spiritually.

Fr. Weldon's comment: It seems that, according to these responses, most people know that we offer daily Mass each day of the week, Eucharistic Adoration various times throughout the week, Stations of the Cross during Lent, existing and new bible studies, 12-14 hour access to our Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Prayer before meetings, Missions and a variety of priests who visit with difficult styles and approaches to preaching. Combined, it is nurturing a fertile environment for spiritual growth.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	6	2.3
Disagree	15	5.7
Agree	152	57.6
Strongly Agree	88	33.3
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

9. I feel that the parish offers a variety of opportunities for adult learning experiences (e.g., Bible study, speakers, discussions, etc.).

Fr. Weldon's comment: Most agreed, but it is my hope that we can grow into these opportunities. CAFE is an example of this growth, as are more speakers open to both residents and students.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	23	8.7
Strongly Disagree	4	1.5
Disagree	42	15.9
Agree	139	52.7
Strongly Agree	53	20.1
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

10. I want to grow more in my faith as a Catholic

Fr. Weldon's comment: Most agreed, but it is my hope that we can grow into these opportunities.

CAFE is an example of this growth, as are more speakers open to both residents and students.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	12	4.5
Strongly Disagree	1	.4
Disagree	4	1.5
Agree	96	36.4
Strongly Agree	145	54.9
Missing response	6	2.3
Total	264	100.0

11. I want to grow more in my spirituality

Fr. Weldon's comment: Spirituality is in many ways our way of relating to God in prayer.

Spiritualities can be as various as people, though there are some basic and established forms for spirituality. Whether it be in nature or before the Blessed Sacrament, or both and more, I would hope that eventually we would all want to grow more in our relationship with God through prayer.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	5	1.9
Disagree	4	1.5
Agree	97	36.7
Strongly Agree	154	58.3
Missing response	4	1.5
Total	264	100.0

12. In general, parish educational programs foster an awareness of religious vocations.

Fr. Weldon’s comment: Many here answered, “Don’t know”. By religious vocations, it is meant vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and the consecrated life as a sister, nun, brother, monk, etc. This a process where it is important to help people to grow in awareness, acceptance, understanding and finally discernment. At different levels of parish educational programs, this is approached in different ways. With the children, it may be planting seeds in FEP or at home. With high school students it may be answering their questions about the religious life. In college, it may be visiting seminaries and convents. As young adults it may be serious in-depth conversations with the vocations director for the diocese or religious order. For those over 35, it may mean information gathering on the permanent diaconate. In short, I would like to see this all of these efforts increased within our parish because each of those vocations serves a specific need in the Body of Christ, the Church.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	97	36.7
Strongly Disagree	3	1.1
Disagree	26	9.8
Agree	123	46.6
Strongly Agree	12	4.5
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

13. In general, parishioners are greeted with hospitality as they enter the weekly liturgy

Fr. Weldon’s comment: It was nice to see that 247 of 264 respondents feel good about how they are welcomed each Sunday.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	2	.8
Strongly Disagree	3	1.1
Disagree	10	3.8
Agree	143	54.2
Strongly Agree	104	39.4
Missing response	2	.8
Total	264	100.0

14. Parish leadership identifies and encourages talents and interests of those in the church community

Fr. Weldon's comment: It is hard to get to know people's talents and interests when you only see them individually once/week. That is where the activities fair becomes crucial. I am hoping to put together a complete notebook this upcoming year with all the responses we get from the activities fair. It will be broken into categories from which we can better indentify and encourage people who volunteer their talents and interests.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	55	20.8
Strongly Disagree	7	2.7
Disagree	32	12.1
Agree	124	47.0
Strongly Agree	43	16.3
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

15. Parish leadership seeks a wide diversity of people from the church community for involvement in activities and ministries.

Fr. Weldon's comment: Though many "Don't know", the answer to this would be "yes". We have people of all ages involved in our activities and ministries. Students and residents (of varying length of time in the parish) have participated in different ways and at different times.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	74	28.0
Strongly Disagree	5	1.9
Disagree	42	15.9
Agree	105	39.8
Strongly Agree	36	13.6
Missing response	2	.8
Total	264	100.0

16. Prayer groups and small faith-sharing groups are explained and encouraged

Fr. Weldon's comment: We need to create, encourage and communicate more

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	55	20.8
Strongly Disagree	7	2.7
Disagree	100	37.9
Agree	79	29.9
Strongly Agree	21	8.0
Missing response	2	.8
Total	264	100.0

17. The parish does a good job of encouraging parishioners to read the Catholic Moment

Fr. Weldon's comment: We need to take a more deliberate and quarterly approach to this

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	52	19.7
Strongly Disagree	21	8.0
Disagree	123	46.6
Agree	53	20.1
Strongly Agree	9	3.4
Missing response	6	2.3
Total	264	100.0

18. Retreat/Renewal programs that foster personal spiritual formation (e.g., parish missions, Cursillo, Christ Renews His Parish, Marriage Encounter, Life in the Spirit Seminars, etc.) are made available and encouraged

Fr. Weldon's comment: Many of these are encouraged in the announcements at the end of Mass and made available on the bulletin board halfway down the west stairwell.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	21	8.0
Strongly Disagree	3	1.1
Disagree	16	6.1
Agree	173	65.5
Strongly Agree	50	18.9
Missing response	1	.4
Total	264	100.0

19. The parish contributes a portion of the Sunday collection to worthy community and regional programs for the needy

Fr. Weldon's comment: We do both but must communicate what/where clearly & bi-annually

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	133	50.4
Strongly Disagree	3	1.1
Disagree	6	2.3
Agree	88	33.3
Strongly Agree	33	12.5
Missing response	1	.4
Total	264	100.0

20. The parish does a good job encouraging all leadership staff persons to participate in the Ecclesial Lay Ministry Program or to obtain equivalency training

Fr. Weldon's comment: To this point, I have not personally done this, however, I know it does happen amongst those who have participated already, or are still participating. We do host ELM classes in our parish hall year-round.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	180	68.2
Disagree	13	4.9
Agree	57	21.6
Strongly Agree	13	4.9
Missing response	1	.4
Total	264	100.0

21. The parish does a good job encouraging parishioners to understand the Church's teachings to protect every human's right to life

Fr. Weldon's comment: There are 21 who do not agree. My guess is that I need to cover more with regard to "every" human's right to life, including the elderly. I have not spoken enough on euthanasia and physician assisted suicide.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	9	3.4
Strongly Disagree	3	1.1
Disagree	18	6.8
Agree	152	57.6
Strongly Agree	78	29.5
Missing response	4	1.5
Total	264	100.0

22. The parish does a good job inviting parishioners to participate in local soup kitchens, Habitat for Humanity, and other outreach programs in the local community

Fr. Weldon's comment: We do this through the bulletin but could be clearer with a "volunteer opportunities" section of our website

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	31	11.7
Strongly Disagree	17	6.4
Disagree	87	33.0
Agree	98	37.1
Strongly Agree	28	10.6
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

23. The parish does a good job of conducting its biannual stewardship renewal of time, treasure, and talent

Fr. Weldon's comment: We do this annually, not biannually, because of our unique calendar requirements as a Newman Center Parish. If we can do better, I'm sure the parish council would appreciate feedback on how that can be accomplished and who would be willing to help accomplish it.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	74	28.0
Strongly Disagree	2	.8
Disagree	20	7.6
Agree	126	47.7
Strongly Agree	39	14.8
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

24. The parish does a good job of underscoring the importance of making estate gifts for the long-term financial benefit of the parish, diocese, and universal Church

Fr. Weldon's comment: We need to invite Bob McCreary from Diocese for a presentation and remind people quarterly in the bulletin and on website

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	132	50.0
Strongly Disagree	15	5.7
Disagree	69	26.1
Agree	40	15.2
Strongly Agree	6	2.3
Missing response	2	.8
Total	264	100.0

25. The parish does a good job reaching out to the unchurched, alienated, non-practicing, or marginal Catholics

Fr. Weldon's comment: Most here "Don't know". It happens quite often with the students, but I feel we are lacking on the part of non-students. We currently have no official ministries or programs that seek to accomplish this. It is only through individual efforts that we are reaching who we reach.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	135	51.1
Strongly Disagree	20	7.6
Disagree	57	21.6
Agree	44	16.7
Strongly Agree	7	2.7
Missing response	1	.4
Total	264	100.0

26. The parish encourages a theology of stewardship that promotes sacrificial giving

Fr. Weldon's comment: We can do a better job of this, however, with the economy as it is, I have tried very hard to recognize the tough financial situations people are in and not try to press for more sacrifice than is already happening. For those who can give, or give more however, it would be important to recognize the spiritual and eternal fruit that is born by following Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta's maxim, "Give until it hurts. Then, give some more."

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	67	25.4
Strongly Disagree	3	1.1
Disagree	45	17.0
Agree	125	47.3
Strongly Agree	22	8.3
Missing response	2	.8
Total	264	100.0

27. The parish encourages parishioners to respond generously to diocesan appeals for international aid to the poor and needy

Fr. Weldon's comment: We include envelopes for these specific needs and also place posters and fliers on our bulletin boards making people aware of the need. More could be done in homilies as those collections approach.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	10	3.8
Strongly Disagree	2	.8
Disagree	16	6.1
Agree	179	67.8
Strongly Agree	54	20.5
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

28. The parish maintains its plan and facilities in good condition

Fr. Weldon's comment: Ellen Brinkman, our business manager has a lot on her plate. One of those things includes facilities management. She was very pleased to see that many of you acknowledge that we're doing pretty well in this area. She's got her list of things that need work, and she is well aware of when, how and who can get them done.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	4	1.5
Strongly Disagree	1	.4
Disagree	8	3.0
Agree	123	46.6
Strongly Agree	127	48.1
Missing response	1	.4
Total	264	100.0

29. The Compassionate Ministry uses compassion and understanding in its visitations to the homebound and sick, caring for the grieving, and assisting at funerals

Fr. Weldon's comment: This is done but needs to be communicated better

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	166	62.9
Disagree	5	1.9
Agree	54	20.5
Strongly Agree	36	13.6
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

30. There is proper preparation for reception of the Sacraments, which includes family participation

Fr. Weldon's comment: In short, there is. Mike Haigerty has done a very nice job galvanizing our FEP Sacramental preparation with the help of great volunteers. We could always use more.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	69	26.1
Disagree	5	1.9
Agree	131	49.6
Strongly Agree	56	21.2
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

31. Young adults (i.e., 21 - 40 year-olds) are made to feel a part of the parish community

Fr. Weldon's comment: YAM (Young Adult Ministry) was begun in order to make this group in our parish feel more a part of the parish community. An unintentional consequence of having a Pastor fall within this age range has also helped them to be able to relate more easily and thus become more involved.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	63	23.9
Strongly Disagree	3	1.1
Disagree	15	5.7
Agree	114	43.2
Strongly Agree	66	25.0
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

32. The parish offers complete programs of religious instruction for Adults

Fr. Weldon's comment: Here responses were distributed fairly evenly. What does that tell me? That ideas like CAFE are good and necessary to move many of you to the agree area. As CAFE becomes more familiar, it may help us to see if we're meeting this need, or if we have to do more.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	74	28.0
Strongly Disagree	16	6.1
Disagree	53	20.1
Agree	76	28.8
Strongly Agree	43	16.3
Missing response	2	.8
Total	264	100.0

33. The parish offers complete programs of religious instruction for Youth/Children

Fr. Weldon's comment: I have been told that as a university parish, we have always been somewhat weak in the area of youth ministry for high school-aged parishioners. With the right resources and participation, we can grow in this area. As far as the children of the parish, I am confident that we are doing the best we can as a university parish, but that we will not become satisfied, but be open to ways we can do better.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	56	21.2
Strongly Disagree	3	1.1
Disagree	10	3.8
Agree	136	51.5
Strongly Agree	58	22.0
Missing response	1	.4
Total	264	100.0

34. The parish offers complete programs of religious instruction for College Students

Fr. Weldon’s comment: The bags under my eyes and the calloused hands of our campus minister and FOCUS Missionaries can attest to the fact that we are indeed.

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	73	27.7
Disagree	7	2.7
Agree	104	39.4
Strongly Agree	77	29.2
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

35. In general, how often do you utilize/attend programs offered through the Diocese for spiritual enrichment (e.g., spirituality workshops, bereavement groups, “Why Catholic”, retreats, etc.)? Would you say many times, a few times, on occasion, rarely, or never.

Fr. Weldon’s comment: Yes, I would say this is fairly accurate. Is it possible that we could find someone who is somewhat familiar with the diocese and its programs, and help us to connect better with their offerings?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	75	28.4
Rarely	97	36.7
On occasion	49	18.6
A few times per year	30	11.4
Many times through the year	11	4.2
Missing response	2	.8
Total	264	100.0

36. Are you aware that the parish provides occasional programs that address special needs such as single parenting, divorce, caring for the elderly or disabled, communication skills, etc.?

Fr. Weldon’s comment: We need to create, encourage and communicate more opportunities

	Frequency	Percent
No	195	73.9
Yes	66	25.0
Missing response	3	1.1
Total	264	100.0

37. Next, please circle how often you attend mass at St. Francis, in general

Fr. Weldon's comment: Excellent! I love the fact that 247 of 264 attend at least once/week if not more!

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely	2	.8
Only on special occasions and holidays	1	.4
A few times per year	2	.8
About once per month	1	.4
2 - 3 times per month	10	3.8
Once per week	199	75.4
More than once per week	48	18.2
Total	263	99.6
Missing response	1	.4
Total	264	100.0

38. Please circle the response that best represents who you are in this parish

Fr. Weldon's comment: I expected the resident participation but was happy to see such a good number of the surveys returned by the students

	Frequency	Percent
I am a resident parishioner (not a college student)	213	80.7
I am not an official (registered) parishioner, but I attend mass and other events at St. Francis.	14	5.3
I am a college student	35	13.3
I am a visitor	1	.4
Total	263	99.6

39. Ages ranges

	Frequency	Percent
24-40	37	15.3
41-65	135	51.3
66-75	15	5.9
76-94	63	24
Total	253	95.8

40. Approximately how many years have you been attending mass/events at St. Francis?

Fr. Weldon's comment: This was a nice spread and showed that we have a good number of new families who are also investing in the parish and this process--almost as many as those who have been here from 10-15 years

	Frequency	Percent
Less than a year	16	6.1
1 - 3 years	47	17.8
4 - 9 years	40	15.2
10 - 15 years	48	18.2
16 - 20 years	25	9.5
21 - 29 years	30	11.4
30 or more years	56	21.2
Total	262	99.2

41. Gender: Female Male

	Frequency	Percent
Female	155	58.7
Male	94	35.6
Missing response	15	5.7
Total	264	100.0

42. Race/ethnicity

	Frequency	Percent
Not White/Caucasian	6	2.3
White/Caucasian	256	97.0
Missing response	2	.8
Total	264	100.0

43. Are you a U.S. citizen?

	Frequency	Percent
No	1	.4
Yes	259	98.1
Missing response	4	1.5
Total	264	100.0

43b. If you answered no, where are you from? (List country here)

	Frequency	Percent
US	262	99.2
Canada	1	.4
England	1	.4
Total	264	100.0

44. Are you married now, have you never married, are you living with a domestic partner, or are you widowed, divorced, or separated?

	Frequency	Percent
Married	174	65.9
Never Married	58	22.0
Living with Domestic Partner	2	.8
Divorced	13	4.9
Widowed	12	4.5
Missing response	5	1.9
Total	264	100.0

45. Level of education completed (Circle one)

	Frequency	Percent
Less than High School	3	1.1
High School Diploma (or GED)	24	9.1
Some College	53	20.1
Bachelor's Degree	82	31.1
Graduate Degree	67	25.4
Doctoral Degree or equivalent	28	10.6
Other	2	.8
Missing response	5	1.9
Total	264	100.0