

## Parish Transformation—Meeting 5

Despite the fact that both the Blackhawks and Cubs were playing, **~23 people attended** this Parish Transformation meeting.

(1) The quantitative and qualitative survey results were presented to parishioners in attendance by Ric Rodriguez, leader of the Archdiocesan Parish Transformation office

(a) See graphs in previous entry on website for quantitative results.

(b) For the qualitative results, a sampling of comments were presented....

For the question: ...what has helped you grow closer to God?

- (a) discussion w/ others about the Catholic faith
- (b) volunteering/service
- (c) daily Mass & prayer
- (d) leadership in community to support my relationship with God
- (e) retreats
- (f) communal reconciliation service
- (g) reading about Pope Francis

For the question: what could the parish offer to help you to grow closer to God?

- (a) being more open & tolerant
- (b) more social events
- (c) retreats
- (d) communal reconciliation service
- (e) arrange meetings to discuss Pope's encyclicals
- (f) good homilies
- (g) improved acoustics
- (h) RCIA

From the field: additional comments....

- (a) focus on children of St. Helen & community
- (b) place more of an emphasis on getting young adults to return to Church
- (c) demographic realities of the area; lots of people who grew up Catholic no longer practice, Catholic population shrinking dramatically
- (d) **considerable criticism** directed at Fr. Frank for all sorts of issues...

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(2) The meeting continued with presentations by Dcn. Cislo of the building blocks **communio**, **missionary spirit**, and **growth in holiness**.

*Communio* (p. 39-42)

**Group I**

Suggested that the Polish *Oplatek* (Christmas wafer) tradition might be very important to achieving this goal. The Parish can take an ethnic-based tradition or activity and use it to reach out & involve others.

*(From poster-sized post-it)*

*Share the Oplatek tradition at Christmas dinner*

*How can we incorporate this tradition more than once a year?*

*Polish community welcomes new Polish parishioners*

*We can start a welcoming committee (& hand out missals)*

**Group II**

Fr. Frank is by himself, therefore he has a hard time doing everything. So we have to support him by doing the greeting, inviting, etc.

*(From poster-sized post-it)*

*Get to know fellow (parishioners??). Struggling with it.*

*Improve ushers/greeters.*

**Group III**

We can try to increase the interactions between the Polish & English-speaking populations, but language is a real barrier. Suggest ESL/PSL classes by Darek & include an introduction to Polish traditions.

*(From poster-sized post-it)*

- We tend to stick to our own*
- There has been increased focus in the past year to increase welcoming spirit (e.g. coffee in vestibule, St. Joseph's table)*
- Language is a barrier, rather than personalities or desire to communicate. Maybe ESL/PSL classes at the Parish.*
- Explain Polish traditions in the bulletin to help promote upcoming events.*

much more	12
somewhat more	3
keep the same	0
do less	0

**Missionary Spirit** (p. 43-46 of Mission Workbook)

**Comments from the entire group:**

- Start our own service project... we should work locally....
- figure out a group who could receive our donations
- Margaret suggested that we could reach out to seniors; at St. Elizabeth Medical Center, many seniors are completely alone on Christmas Eve and would definitely like visitors.

*(From poster-sized post-it, Group 3)*

*Mission should be personal & reflective of Parish community; we first need a mission in order to go out*

*actions to take:*

- *Outreach to local health/social services to fulfill a need*
- *Combine with nearby parishes to promote service/outreach*
- *Take parishioners to events already happening (e.g. Catholic Charities) & discuss/share afterwards*

much more	10
somewhat more	4
keep the same	0
do less	0

**Call to Holiness** (p. 47-50)

Group discussion:

Our parish is already doing the following: rosary in Polish every day in May & all Saturdays, lots of processions, added confession time (especially before Easter & before Christmas); 2 hours of adoration on the last Saturday of the month & Mass; Polish & English missions.

Gerry pointed out that we used to have Rosary in English every Wednesday evening, but people stopped attending, so the opportunity disappeared....

Conclusion: the opportunities are here, but few people take advantage of them; how do we get more people to respond?

much more	0
somewhat more	11
keep the same	2
do less	0