

Sunday Mornings at St. Malachi Survey

Executive Summary

All of St. Malachi Church was given the chance to voice their opinion this April in a survey to take the pulse of our parish on our Sunday Morning format, which we changed four years ago.

Previous Sunday Morning Schedule: 3 Sunday Masses – 9:30, 11:00 AM, 12:30 PM; PSR Class 9:30-10:30 AM, Coffee Hours following 9:30 and 11:00 Mass.

Current Sunday Morning Schedule: 9:00 AM Mass; 10:15-11:15 AM Coffee Hour & socializing, PSR, Adult education sessions, Special programs & meetings; 11:30 AM Mass followed by Coffee Hour. There was no change to the Saturday Vigil Mass at 4:30 PM.

Changing the Sunday Morning Mass Schedule almost four years ago had several purposes:

- To give adults an opportunity to grow together in faith and social awareness through programs, presentations and discussions from speakers both inside and outside the Parish.
- To allow children in PSR to attend Mass with their parents, peers and teachers.
- To create a time between our two Masses for opportunities for people from both Masses to come together for presentations & discussions, socialize, and build a sense of community.
- To create a time for parish meetings, including whole parish and small group, without requiring people to make an additional trip to St. Malachi.

Response: 189 people (of 587 adult parishioners; assuming all are parishioners, 32%); 171 regularly attend Mass at St. Malachi (29% of adult parishioners). The aim of the survey was to answer these questions: *How has this change worked out for the Parish in general?* and, *How can we continue to improve our Sunday Morning format to better live out our Parish Mission Statement – “Eucharistic People, United in Prayer, Welcoming to All, Serving the Poor?”* It also provided some insights about our Parish and parishioners in terms of demographics, involvement and interests.

Section 1: Demographics

- 86% of respondents to the survey were 50 years of age or older.
- 71% of respondents come from the Near West Side of Cleveland or the Western Suburbs.
- The aspects of St. Malachi that were most influential in drawing these respondents to the Parish are worship, a sense of community, awareness of our outreach ministries, and participation in our outreach ministries to our neighborhood. (Monday Night Meal, Backdoor, etc.). In addition to these, respondents’ comments indicated that belonging to a “community of faith” is something that is very important to them.

RECOMMENDATION: To establish a strategic plan that focuses on our outreach ministries and evangelization in our developing neighborhood, especially to young adults and youth.

SECTION 2: Worship Experience

- 81% of respondents attend Mass weekly.
 - Of these: 15% attend Saturday 4:30 PM
 - 26% attend Sunday 9:00 AM
 - 40% attend Sunday 11:30 AM
- 70% of respondents do not have a conflict with the current Mass times.
 - Including 85% of 4:30 PM Mass attendees
 - 89% of 9:00 AM Mass attendees
 - 56% of 11:30 AM Mass attendees.
- 29% of respondents do have a conflict with the current Mass times.
 - Including: 15% of 4:30 PM Mass attendees
 - 11% of 9:00 AM Mass attendees
 - 44% of 11:30 AM Mass attendees.
- 76% of respondents who reported a conflict with current Mass times cited the reason as “11:30 Mass is too late” (22% of entire survey). Respondents from 11:30 Mass accounted for 66% of those comments.
- 89% of those who attend 11:30 Mass preferred an earlier Mass time (48.4% of entire survey).
- 29% of respondents who attend 9:00 Mass would be willing to have an earlier Mass time (8.3% of the whole survey).
- 31% of those describing their “Ideal Sunday Morning” indicated an openness to moving the whole schedule earlier by thirty minutes. (Note: this would duplicate the Mass schedule of St. Patrick Church, resulting in fewer Mass time choices for the neighborhood residents.)
- There was an openness to having one Mass on Sunday (54% of respondents). (Note: this would eliminate the option of choosing a Mass time that fits personal schedules and preferences, and could negatively affect weekly Mass attendance.)
- Regarding the importance of Mass “style”, the responses were split into thirds with approximately one-third (37.4%) stating that style was NOT important, one-third (27%) NEUTRAL about it, and one-third (35.6%) stating that it WAS important. Respondents’ comments indicated that different aspects of style were very important to individuals.
- 54% of respondents were open to varying / alternating Mass styles across the two Sunday Masses. 27.5% were neutral; 25% were not open to varying Mass styles.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Regarding having One Sunday Mass: Continue to offer two Sunday Masses at St. Malachi in order to provide all parishioners and the neighborhood community with different options for Sunday worship.

Regarding 9:00 AM Mass: Continue to offer the 9:00 AM Sunday Mass. Only 29% percent of 9:00 AM survey respondents preferred an earlier time, and this Mass was already moved back thirty minutes from 9:30 almost four years ago.

Regarding the 11:30 AM Mass: The committee had a much more difficult time making a recommendation regarding this Mass time.

The first option is that the start time of the second Sunday AM Mass be moved to 11:15 AM, with PSR and other programs running from 10:10 to 11:10 AM. This change would provide

adequate time for PSR and other “Between the Masses” activities, while demonstrating that Parish Council has listened to the conflicts and preferences of the 11:30 Mass attendees.

- As indicated above, 44.4% of the current 11:30 Mass attendees indicated a schedule conflict with that time.
- 89% of this same group preferred an earlier Mass time. These opinions were also reflected in numerous survey comments.
- The committee discussed the impacts of moving this Mass back to 11:00 AM upon the events which occur between the Masses, and determined that the main problem is ensuring a full hour block for PSR while allowing students and their families to attend a mass of their choice.

The second option is to continue with the current Sunday Mass schedule, 9:00 AM & 11:30 AM with PSR & other programs running from 10:15 to 11:15.

- The committee was unable to come to consensus concerning the first option.

SECTION 3: PSR

- 5% of respondents to the survey have children attending PSR.
- 71% (44/62) of respondents who had an opinion, think the 10:15 AM time is a good time for PSR. (26% of the whole survey).
- 29% (18/62) of respondents who had an opinion, DO NOT think the 10:15 AM time is a good time for PSR. (11% of the whole survey).
- 100% of respondents who had an opinion, included PSR in their “Ideal Sunday Morning” schedule.

RECOMMENDATION: To maintain the current schedule for PSR

SECTION 4: Adult Opportunities/Activities

- 63% (120/189) of respondents have attended some Sunday Morning Sessions.
- 37% of respondents indicated that they have not attended a Sunday Morning Session for various reasons. 19% do not attend Sunday Mass at St. Malachi, 16% were not interested, 12% have prior commitment/conflict & 12% believe Sundays are for family/leisure time.
- 35% of respondents felt the Sunday Morning opportunities/activities have enhanced their faith experience and sense of community here at St. Malachi.
- Comments indicated that 81% of the respondents who had an opinion, would like to see much of what we are already doing in the time between the Masses, including: excellent speakers, discussion groups, shared meals, service opportunities & socializing at Coffee Hour.
 - There is strong support for continuing Coffee Hour/Socializing activities in our Sunday Morning Program.
 - A Spiritual Study group and a Book Club meet regularly and continually welcomes new members.

- Respondents suggested that more communication and advance notice of upcoming events would increase participation in future presentations and events.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Continue the Adult Opportunities between the Masses.

To implement the following suggestions for improvement:

- Have more advance notice and publicity for various events & presentations.
- Make more effort to reach out and include new people as well as regular attendees.
- Explore options for presentations/programs that do not conflict with socializing at Coffee Hour.
- To keep a record of number of attendees at presentations & activities.

Conclusion:

The survey results indicated that the current Sunday Morning at St. Malachi format has accomplished several of the goals for which it was established four years ago. Parishioners have a choice of two Sunday morning Masses to attend. Parishioners also have opportunities to grow in faith and in social awareness through a variety of programs. PSR children have the opportunity to attend Mass with parents, peers and teachers. Parishioners from both Masses have the opportunity to come together for education, socialization and community building. Some Parish meetings have occurred between the Masses. A book club has been firmly established on the third Sunday of the month.

While attendance has varied at these activities, those who have attended rated them as informative, valuable and well worth continuing. The survey indicated that a more clearly published schedule and better promotion is needed to expand this opportunity to a larger group of parishioners.

While creating opportunities for deepening our bonds and life as members of St. Malachi Parish, the current format has also created some tension due to the change in Mass times, particularly the change on Sunday from 11AM to 11:30AM Mass. This has been a difficult issue for this committee to resolve.

We turn this information over to Parish Council and our Pastor for their review and prayerful discernment. Thank you.

Sunday Morning Review Committee

Members of the Review Committee: Fr. Tony Schuerger, Linda Wilson, Linda Kennard, Dave Kennard, Dan Smith, Cathy Graham, Terry Jungquist, Pat Cleary-Burns, Marianne Kerr, Dorothy Weathers, John Paul Stephens, and Pat Masterson