

St Joseph's Catholic Church, Oatley Parish Pastoral Council

2010 Survey Results

Three things I would like to see developed.....

Church Building

- SVDP to direct people to vacant seats when church is full because of special events
- To leave our beautiful altar as it is
- Consultation with Community on any proposed changes to the church so all are happy & feel they have been included in the process as valued parish members
- More seating – urgently
- Pews need sanding & polishing
- Another entrance
- Overheads used for prayers, hymns, readings etc. at weekend masses
- A Parents' room. Amount of young families has increased. Even if people don't complain about noise, the parents of young children would like to come & enjoy the mass, hear what Fr John is saying. Currently not inviting for young families because of the set up
- More seating for special events
- Sunday night Mass & cater for older teens
- Proper awning at church door instead of sail better option for wet weather
- A bigger church
- Install television/speaker system in hall to cope with overflow at special events with large numbers
To enable everyone attending to feel a part of the Mass

Music

- More variety in music: young children's, old organ style, youth, teenage, solos (taking in turns)
- Much more moderns and uplifting hymns/songs at all Masses
- Youth Mass/Choir – monthly followed by get together, aimed at Years 8 – 12 students in the parish as there is not much for young Catholics and it might encourage young musicians
- A choir with more musical variety – perhaps involving youth
- When there is no organist on Sunday Mass why not have taped music?
- 9am Christmas Day Mass – organist for church which is overflowing (NB: 25/12/10 – Catherine Clark played at this Mass but we haven't had music in previous years)
- More music for younger people – playing instruments (NB: Saskia West & Jane Gleeson have wheels in motion for this idea)

Sacraments

- More assistance for Mrs Horne with Sacramental Programs – volunteers in the Parish need to have every assistance. Perhaps a team of people could undertake smaller jobs within this role
- Communion held at a separate Mass so that children can be with a bigger group & more room for family & friends
- Maureen Horne needs a sainthood with her sacramental program & could need some help

Liturgy

- Saturday 5pm Vigil Mass (4 votes – 2 specified in winter time)
- Would the church be able to employ a pastoral associate?
- Homilies based on today's life issues
- Could we do more to incorporate the scriptures into our way of life?

- Introduce Communion under both species each/some weekends
- Masses not to start a few minutes early as they do now
- Include the readings as PowerPoint slides at Mass

Communication

- More information on what parish council is doing in bulletin or as an addendum to bulletin – many of us oldies are not on the internet
- Wider communication across all groups within the parish – I believe it is being addressed
- Put church notices fortnightly in school newsletter

Youth

- Youth gathering on Friday nights
- Greater presence of our youth group (a spot in the bulletin, more notice of meetings & presence at Mass). More community spirit
- Young Parish Program to give high school/uni students chance to join in activities
- Youth into the Parish – where have all the teenagers gone?
- School/church/year reunions after Mass
- A continuation of church groups for the youth & young people of our parish
- Older teenager group

Spiritual Direction

- Bible Study group to continue/new course half yearly
- Bible Studies: Positive step that we have this session but numbers have dropped from 20 to 3 – 4 attending each fortnight. Many parishioners expecting Fr John to give input. Michael Gleeson doing great job but more spiritual direction & knowledge of bible from another source needed. Is it possible to employ a pastoral associate?
- Eucharistic Adoration preferably before/after Masses
- Parish Reflection Day now & again – perhaps before Christmas when everything is so commercialised

Social Justice

- Social Justice & Outreach something we could help with more. CWL always has great ideas from some of the amazing speakers at monthly meetings – from a small suggestion big things grow
- Advertise the social justice networks the parish/parishioners are currently involved in
- Oatley is a relatively affluent parish, maybe we could twin ourselves with a parish in an area of poverty & potentially offer financial assistance as well as spiritual support
- More Parish Outreach programs. Projects to assist others
- Establish strategy for reaching out to lapsed Catholics in the local Parish area
- Back up support for visiting sick people in hospital and homes. Load could be shared on a roster/mentoring basis (2 votes)
- Growing sense that Parish Community is an exclusive club for materially well off ... “A parish for winners” – lower social classes & temporary unit dwellers need not apply
- Attempt at systematic visiting of elderly & long term sick rather than the haphazard self-reporting that exists at present
- Notification in writing to our PP of those parishioners who are ill or house bound to enable them to receive the sacraments (NB: a notice is currently put in bulletin monthly regarding this)

Community Social

- Dinner dances/parish dinners
- Welcoming committee with a representative to greet people at Mass (4 votes)
- Some morning teas to celebrate special Feast Days
- Morning tea/other type of gathering after each Mass

- Organise special/social days around our church calendar (e.g. St Joseph's Day)
- Spiritual retreats for adults
- Groups to visit mothers who have had a baby or cooking for mums with new babies
- Parents to help in outings for Children's Groups
- More Parish events. Very little opportunity for parishioners without children at school to become involved
- Family Gathering Meeting to encourage people to bring their Catholic family quarterly/half yearly
- Family Groups – a good way for new families & older people on own to make friends & feel they are a family within the Parish
- Volunteers at weekends handing out bulletin & other relevant leaflets (3 votes)
- Welcoming book for new parishioners
- Social activities for people 45 years & over
- The occasional parish picnic/sports or other social get together

Other categories

- Parishioners should be more involved or asked for their thoughts more on things going on in the Parish
- More openness & democratisation of Parish Council
- As PPC members wish to be accessible why not a list of members with phone numbers
- The return of families from this Parish who attend Mass in other Parishes now. Why?
- Fr John needs to interact more with the parishioners, both young & old, as well as the children at the school

Three things I value most about St Joseph's Parish Oatley are

Church

- The painting of the Transfiguration
- The small and comfortable church & air conditioning
- Our church
- Beautiful church

Church Activities

- The work done by: SVDP, CWL, Life Ascending (3 votes for previous 3 groups), Sacristans, Readers, Acolytes, Ministers of the Eucharist, Altar Servers & those whose names appear on the bulletin & Parish Council (2 votes)
- Weekly newsletter
- Smooth running of the Sacraments
- Confirmation groups lead by the young adults team
- Visitors to the sick
- The friendly groups we are involved with in the Parish, Saturday Coffee Club
- The Masses, Adoration, the church being open for prayer

Youth

- Establishment of youth group (5 votes)
- Altar servers, young choir/music at Mass
- Youth in the parish
- Good activities for young people
- Great young teens group, very committed Holy leaders, great role models, examples of faith for all

Acolytes & Altar Servers

- Friendly, great Parish Priest, lots of altar servers/readers
- Children altar serving (2 votes)
- Acolytes, altar boys & girls, very polite & well trained

Music

- Songs, school Masses
- Jane Gleeson's Children's Singing Group
- The Choir (3 votes)
- Singing at every Mass
- The Music
- Organ at Mass

School – Church Connection

- Genuine connection St Joseph's School has with the community – excellent communication
- Link with the school
- School principal makes this church lively with young children joining in the Mass
- The school & church are Catholic
- Thanks for a great Parish

Liturgy

- Daily Mass
- Children's Liturgy, program is great & my children enjoy going & doing the set activities
- Maureen Horne Holy Communion & Sacramental Programs
- Michael Gleeson – Bible Studies
- Children's Liturgy
- Programs to suit all ages – “Life Ascending”, Children's Liturgy & Youth Group
- I recently joined the Bible Study Group. It's very considerate
- Children's Liturgy is very successful in assisting children understand key Gospel messages
- The many facilities for Worship
- Rory Geoghegan: There is Children's Liturgy, choir sometimes & I go to school here
- The beautiful church
- Prayerful Masses
- The Liturgy has good balance of Catholic tradition with enough informality to bring the Spirit of God into the formal worship & be relevant to daily life
- The Catechist Program so well run
- The Sacramental Program so well run
- Our Parish of Oatley is a wonderful Parish to belong to and be part of
- Socialising after Masses – weekly & weekend
- Oatley is a special Parish & will always be special. It is great to be part of such a lovely community
- The Parish Community, the people are very welcoming & friendly
- Fr John's great homilies –not too long

Fr John

- Fr John is very welcoming & willing to listen to & support initiatives
- Our Parish Priest (several votes)
- Frequency of Masses, weekday homilies & Sacramental programs
- Our Parish Priest – his Masses & sermons, his care of the Parishioners & his friendliness
- The daily Mass, Fr John's homilies & all he has to offer
- Having a priest such as Fr John to lead the Parish – we are very fortunate as a parish
- Fr John's homilies very scriptural & knowledge building
- Fr John very hard working & impresses me so much – no matter how tired I am I come to Oatley Parish every week
- Fr John's Pastoral leadership & development of Pastoral Council
- Fr John is very approachable/amiabile
- Sermons & homilies stay loyal to readings
- Long homilies which give depth & explanation to the Word of God
- Fr John & the way he conducts the Masses
- Homily – Fr John always speaks clearly & to the point and he thoughtfully explains the Gospel

Sense of Community

- Small (2 votes)
- The friendships developed over the years with most of the Parishioners (2 votes)
- Friends & cooperation
- Morning tea program after 8am Mass is a good way of increasing social interaction with people I may only meet at Mass
- School/Community/Family, liturgy groups
- Community feel (2 votes)
- Lively Community spirit
- I like the friendly caring people (3 votes)
- Small caring community with lots of parishioner involvement. Morning tea after Sunday Mass

- Small community feel – seeing the same faces weekly & getting to know other parishioners
- The tolerance of young children and their various behaviours
- Close knit & friendly atmosphere
- Welcoming & inclusive parish community
- A community & caring parish. Encouragement of new ideas & a strong support influence
- Mix of ages at Mass
- Warmth & friendliness within the Parish
- Lovely school environment
- We are a village church and would like to remain so

Negative comment received on Community: Faux community awareness. Smiles & handshakes during Mass by those who minutes later shun your greeting as they attend the same shops

Church

- The painting of the Transfiguration
- The small & comfortable church (and the air conditioning)
- Our church