

Elmira Ministry Assessment Survey

Parishioner Comments

Fall 2016

Note: Negative comments referring to particular individuals have been deleted. They have been shared with the pastors for their own use as well as, where appropriate, to share with those they supervise.

The Mass in the extraordinary form should be offered in one of the churches.

I go to Mass daily. Should have more times for Confession than limited times on Saturday.

Untie the Church - realize women can help the priests. The surveys are a waster of time. Also, priests should be allowed to marry. Women should be allowed to be deacons.

As a festival volunteer for years - too many new rules. I have been a member of St. Patrick's for almost 50 years. My faith life has grown. Many changes have happened. Most were good Pastoral. Priests and deacons, music are excellent. The many many members support our parish. It has been my honor to be part of the parish community. I pray our Festival continues as well as many of the parish activities that draw our parishioners and community together. After Mass everyone is welcomed by Fr. Rick and asked to come again. Deacon Joe Erway is a great asset. He too covers many needs. Fr. Walt Wainwright (retired) really? Thank you Fr. Walt! Not to forget Deacon George, we are so lucky this point in time. I attend the Adoration Chapel at St. Casimir and stay very busy.

Hearing the music at St. Casimir's before Mass sung in Slovak is not welcoming is not unifying! Because of my age (85 yrs) it's very difficult to answer this survey appropriately, especially when it comes to the young. I feel our #1 concern in our Church, is to get our young people involved at a very early age. On Sunday mornings, where are the young people - not in the pews but participating in sports? Consequently, we need to encourage their parents about the importance of being an active "role Model" for their children, of the importance of God in our family lives!

Page 4 - "#4 - Results are not shared or published even after surveys are taken & compiled. Homilies are too long. Sacrament of Reconciliation needs more variety of times.

Perhaps more outreach to draw parishioners in for sacramental preparation. I think there is a need to educate young people esp in confirmation prep, those contemplating marriage and young families about the importance of the daily sacramental life and meaning of the sacraments. I think we have generationally lost the significance of our faith as a whole. I think marriage prep should include a stronger focus on life issues and a program to properly instruct human sexuality combined with the teachings of the church on contraception and the laws of marriage. Something based on the "theology of the body" which JPII initiated (for example). We are lacking the fullness of the faith. Too many "practicing" Catholics lack depth of Faith. If people could learn its tremendous fullness and gifts they would see it as something so beautiful and enriching, instead of restrictive. It is the path to true freedom!!

We need Vacation Bible School in the summer ! We desperately need a vibrant Youth Ministry !

Contact should be made to parishioners who have not been seen in church.

I would like more opportunities made known for parishioners to take part in lay ministries.

We need to get people involved, especially the under 50 group, and I have no idea how, I see other churches' (not Catholic) parking lots full on Sundays and weeknights. Are these people so different

from us in time constraints or have we Catholics become "bored" with our faith. I spent two years teaching in a Christian (not Catholic) high school where required chapel, mission projects, local outreach was so vibrant and fully involved - a level of spirit I do not feel within the Catholic Schools, Help! Many Catholics have joined these other sects.

This survey is unfair. All questions do not apply equally to each of the 3 parishes. Respondents will answer based on their parish affiliation/experience!!

my health and age keeps me from everything my church provides. I do what I can to stay involved. We are an active and caring church.

Blessed Sacrament clergy and staff epitomize the mission of the church--welcoming to all. Although I am unfamiliar with some of the aspects of the pastoral ministry, I am concerned that ailing and elderly parishioners fall through the cracks when they stop being able to come to church. I may not know the efforts being made to support them but feel that the church does need to be a major source of contact and referral to social services agencies, etc., for those unable to help themselves.

It would be nice to assess if parishioners' with handicaps could be liturgical ministers or eucharistic ministers.

I would also like to see improved handicap seating in St. Patrick's etc. I would love to be able to return to the above positions if I could do so with a walker.

I think the Catholic Church needs to listen to what the parishioners need and want. Taking away our priests and closing churches at the same time will not keep people coming back to church. We do get attached to our priests and need that connection in order to talk to our priests when we need to, to feel free to volunteer to help out and to offer suggestions that might improve all of our church lives. The Bishop and those making these types of decisions do not live here with us. It is very hard to get non-catholics interested in joining our faith when we are not sure what church or priest we will have. If the Bishop wonders why fewer and fewer people remain in the church, I suggest he truly listen to what we have to say that is important to us. The other churches in our area that are not Catholic are gaining and taking people from our own churches. Their pastors remain here and bonding forms and keeps people going to church and more joining. I do not understand why it has to be "hard" or "difficult" to be Catholic. I would like to think it should be loving, fulfilling and caring. We cannot experience any of this consistency when our priests are taken away and even our churches taken away. Please, please, please leave our priests where they are or sadly I can honestly say you will see fewer and fewer people stay in our parishes. You really need to listen to what we are saying, not just going through the motions of listening. If we did not care what happens we would not be asking for these things. Also you should have had more people than just one person from parish council to represent us. It would have made a more rounded council.

Need people not to talk before mass trying to pray. Need confession before first Communion. Too many unfamiliar hymns and difficult to follow both music and words. The Church has always had many, many beautiful hymns that are seldom used or sang. Poor would be better served if all the funds from the annual mission collection stayed in parish.

I have been a member of our Lady of Lourdes Church for 75 years. I have attended OLL since it was established. My family sacrificed much to build OLL. I am a member of one of the founding families. It is one of the most beautiful Churches in our community. I do not see the need for personal information.

I struggle with the fact that children are not baptized because their parents/ families can't/ won't find the time for "preparation". You have hundreds of wonderfully faithful and devoted parishioners who were never "prepared" for baptism. Please offer "Open Baptism" to all babies. If you decide to not allow them communion or penance that is also not right in my mind, but to not baptize a baby is just wrong! I also feel that the church should change its views on Marriage in the Church. If a couple wants to be married in a church, that should be celebrated, not denied because they are not a member/ I

understand the philosophy, but people show their devotion to God in different ways. Because they are not active members who donate regularly, they should not be denied the honor of being married in a church by a priest. Finally, I am not happy about all of the "Extra Collections". I always felt that the former Bishop lied to us when we started the "Bishop's Appeal" I went house to house collection for his campaign. He promised that there would be no extra collections. After several years it started again and seems to have grown yearly. I certainly understand a yearly missionary or a disaster fund but it has gotten out of control. I know many, many people who are using that as their excuse to not attend regularly, but even I, a weekly church goer is getting overwhelmed.

Others who want to converse should respect those who need silence during prayer in church.

My husband and I have attended the parish for a year. The first thing we received our envelopes. At this point, I can't remember if we got a letter welcoming us to the parish, however, I do know we also received a church census. We have not filled out the census yet because of our circumstances and I'm not sure exactly how to answer some of the questions. This is an area where I feel the parish could use some work. Envelopes should not be the first thing a new family receives. A welcome letter, including a "flyer" that has an outline of ministries and contact information of how to get involved. For me, as a fairly new parishioner, this is something that would be extremely helpful. In the past, I have served in various ways in the parishes I've attended, and would love to get more involved. I'm just not sure how. That being said, we love the parish and will continue attending and supporting it. Just some food for thought!

The one recurring theme that comes to me as I take this survey is "old and tired". Due to the priest shortage many ministries are not taken care of. Masses, marriages and funerals and other sacraments are important but many other things are let go. Example: I texted my priest to get feedback on how my liturgical reading was going - no reply. I feel guilty taking up the poor guy's time when he is so overloaded just keeping his head above water. I have a family that is healthy and active and I don't feel the church offers much for them like other church's do. Again, I feel guilty expecting activities and niceties when the priests can barely keep up with all the needs of sick and dying. This is a very frustrating situation since tons of Catholic's would step up to ordination if women and married folks were allowed. Now the Elmira Catholic parishes are being forced to scale back again. I am very depressed about the whole thing.

Evangelization of fallen away Catholics, luke-warm Catholics and non-Catholics is essential.

A few parish culture things I'd tag for a makeover:

1. Introduce charismatic Mass. Talk about the Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
2. Remind people of the need for reverence and why the church building is a sacred space. Remind them that chit chat and gossip are not welcome in a place that is to be for prayer and communion. Also maybe remind them that children running around like wild animals isn't conducive to a prayerful experience, either (I know, it's an ongoing problem...).
3. Allow more time for Communion meditation AND lead people in learning about meditation and contemplative prayer.
4. Opportunities for renewal, retreat, and deeper knowledge of our faith.
5. Personal outreach to those who stop coming to Mass.
6. Instruct people in the reason and way of the "kiss of peace," that it isn't just about shaking hands with your own family members and ignoring people you might not know. Yes, this happens. All. The. Time. "warm and welcoming" don't enter into it much of the time.
7. Saturday morning Mass with Benediction and Novena to the Blessed Mother.
8. Better advertising for the devotions that do go on. Don't just hide it in the bulletin. Talk about it from the ambo and invite people - also tell them WHY we do these devotions and how they benefit the world.
9. Monthly Holy Hour for vocations. Invite parishes from outside Elmira.
10. Cannot stress this enough: MORE collaboration and community with both Catholic Charities and Notre Dame. Past politics are irrelevant. Let's get down to the core of our shared belief and move forward TOGETHER. Notre Dame students being so disconnected from the Confirmation preparation is not a good thing. (I just blew my anonymous cover, but I don't care.)

In a nutshell:
Evangelization, community, contemplatives in action.

Would like more opportunities to chat with clergy and staff before Mass to get to know them better.

Rather than eliminating Masses or closing churches, I would be comfortable attending a Communion Service.

All parishes would profit from the inclusion of women in the diaconate. I have promoted this change and all women I talk to agree. Why do I never hear any priests and deacons taking action to further this cause. Check out Future Church on line. Things would change rapidly if women in large numbers stopped putting money in the collection basket. I think women are the ones keeping giving up to the degree we have it.

we need to find a way to reach out to young families.

Would love to see more liturgical events scheduled for communal prayer and worship to include reading of scripture homily and Benediction

I feel that our parish is doing so many great things. It would be nice to see a few Bible Studies throughout the year.

Improvement in the support of THE RIGHT TO LIFE MOVEMENT. Catholic Parishes should be out front in their support for Right to Life Advocates

The catholic school is so expensive average families cannot afford to send their children. Holy Family and ND have become exclusive private schools for the very rich

Homilies could be shortened. As the homily goes longer you lose the purpose of the homily and people stop listening.

None

Should involve more activities for kids and teenagers

St. Charles Borromeo is our strength and inspiration through every week. We believe God led us to this church and parish in many significant circumstances, and our pastor, Father Scott Kubinski was an intrinsic element in guiding us to faith and church.

Father John demonstrates a very sincere and caring attitude toward everyone in the parish, by reaching out with a hello, a hand shake, and a compassionate greeting of welcome,

Some strengths of the parish:

Sunday Masses are generally well attended showing that our community is focused on praise, worship and Eucharist Sunday Masses are prayerful. Homilies are inspiring to me.

People are very generous, with the time, talents and treasure- Christmas baskets, food pantry, Elmira Community Kitchen, etc.

Clergy and Parish staff are hard-working and make time for others. Service to sick and homebound is outstanding. Day of reconciliation during Lent (5+ hours for priests) speaks volumes about their love for parishes

Places for improvement-

Hospitality at Mass- some suggestions: greeters at door (great service oppt for youth), announcement at beginning of Mass- please say hello to the person(s) next to you; coffee hour after Mass (perhaps quarterly, though not sure where this would happen at St. Patrick)

Promoting senior and youth connections about faith journeys. Much like we hear about veterans talking to school groups, could seniors tell their stories to inspire our youth?

Vacation Bible School- could parish work with Holy Family to resume this wonderful activity?
Helping young people stay connected with faith during college

southern Tier needs more support from Diocese of Rochester especially for catholic schools and parish support.

Great Parish.....

who chose these questions this survey can be summed up like this. speak from the heart, don't be sensitive to tough issues like abortion, same sex marriage, and reach out more to the talent thats out here. study Groups

I am a registered member of one parish, Blessed Sacrament, yet, my spiritual needs are met in various ways by all of the Elmira parishes and Mount Saviour. I am welcomed by the Catholic Community & those who serve us in each & every one! I feel the cooperative spirit that is engendered in our area adds to the richness of our Faith in God, those who serve us, & one another!

parishioners asked to volunteer and then submit volunteer info forms but there is lack of outreach and contact to engage service

There is a need to offer the sacrament of reconciliation on a much more frequent basis. Offering confession only once a week, and at the same time for all the parishes, is insufficient and does not meet the needs of most parishioners.

Wish _____ would leave the back doors closed till end of Mass, he opens the doors before the sign of peace and you have elderly in wheelchairs with walkers in the back of the church that are freezing he needs to stop walking up and down the aisles trying to find people seats it's very annoying with his keys clanging and the doors need to be kept closed because this cold air is blowing in on the elderly at the end of mass then the doors should be open

I attend all three parishes, depending on my schedule. therefore I answered the questions with all 3 parishes in mind.

Would like to see lay involvement improved. Too much reliance is given to people volunteering. Need to recognize parishioners' talents and recruit them to add depth and breadth to parish activities. Get back to post-Vatican II use of laity. We are not second class citizens As the number of priests per parishioner declines, we need to offer Communion services to bring people together, sacramentally. This diocese has limited Communion services and has removed the women who were providing this service. This was a mistake.

it concerns me that we are seeing new, modern churches being constructed throughout Chemung County. Yet it seems the Catholic Community is struggling to maintain levels of membership. I don't understand why this is happening.

We need for the younger people to step up and do for our parish because our elderly are unable to do as much as they would like . We need to encourage our youth that they are needed and wanted to be part of our church family. They are our future.

Doing a great job, generally! Many are feeling left out because they are home bound and NEVER see a priest!

Father Rick is wonderful spiritual leader who sincerely lives the gospel. We are blessed to have him.

The choir adds a spiritual tone to the 10:30am Mass- -- their talent and commitment is very much appreciated.

I attend bible studies at other churches, I wish we had bible studies.

There a great need for leadership and creativity in the parishes.

Would love to be able to read and reflect on the homilies. Sometimes I miss something due to noise or distraction

More spiritual music in our churches. Drums and loud music are very annoying to hearing aid wearing individuals. The music needs to be toned down.

More need for first Friday and first Sat devotions. my mom has been in a nursing facility for 4 yrs and has only been seen one time by a priest or member of the parish. Need for more variety of mass times daily and weekend

I would like longer homilies.

more daily masses
more days of recollection

Very worried about the availability of priests and the lack of programming for youth. Also feel disconnected sometimes from the church as a whole. I see the folks that I regularly see when I go to Mass but sometimes don't feel like I see anyone else in the church.

marriage vocation ?? What is that?

Parish should be more integrated with Holy Family School. Priests should visit classrooms on a regular basis, maybe once a year.

Youth ministry does not exist since Ryan Salisbury has left.

The survey does not seem to solicit quality information. Was it based off the mission of the parishes or the goals and objectives set by the Dioceses? The questions seem to ask for confirmation about what you already want to do as opposed to seeking what the Parishioners want or need.

I pray for the best!

We have a wonderful church family at St. Mary's Southside. My family has had a member here since 1936 and I am thankful to have wonderful memories at church, school, cyo and religious education.

I think there needs to be better coordination of the various food pantries so that those truly in need are the ones receiving food. Many just go from food pantry to food pantry because they can.

Some homilies at _____ are TOO LONG, too academic, and do not serve their purpose which is to apply the gospel to everyday life. Look around and see just how many people nod off!!!!

I thank everyone working to provide our community with a vibrant, caring, and welcoming Catholic experience. One concern moving forward would be to assure that weekend mass is available at different times. All three sites having mass at 10:30 could be improved.

We would like to see OLL remain open and have more masses. Our music director is awesome (Christ the Redeemer).

what is evident at Sunday mass is the absence of young adults , families, students. very concerning

We must attract young people to our faith. The church must adapt to divorcees and not be monolithic in all matters.

Cards or something in the church pews for new members to send in to join parish.

more follow up is needed when we ask for volunteers or have meetings so the entire Church knows what is going on. We need to know what our Parish Councils are doing to help to keep our doors open. What are we doing to reach those parishioners on our books, but do not come to Church or support the Church?

I think the pastors need to be more present and available. Too often, I hear that priests do not return phone calls in a timely fashion.

What the church offers is wonderful. Leadership and guidance is there. People have to want to practice and participate in our faith. We have the core of people who participate and worship. How do we, not just the pastors, deacons, sisters and lay people, the members of the church join in to assist more? In addition we cannot take our priests for granted, there are too few and the work is tremendous. Be serious their well-being, we cannot do enough for them. Being selfish, we need them for the sacrifice of the Mass, the consecration of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. "Do this in memory of me." Thank you.

This is a wonderful parish.

There is a major problem that needs to be addressed: We are still operating in a parish model that worked several generations ago when there was a strong Christian culture and strong Christian families. People need to be evangelized and disciplined in living the Christian life. The vast majority of beliefs and lifestyles in our community are indistinguishable from the broader public. Everything else we do as a parish should flow out of our commitment to Christ and our faith in him. Yet faith and discipleship are very, very low among the under 60 crowd. If we fail to proclaim the gospel and make disciples, we fail in everything else as well. Furthermore, research shows that children will adopt the values of their parents and faith of their parents, by and large. But, what happens when parents do not know Christ and themselves have never made any commitment to Him? Providing faith formation to children only seems futile if their parents are not disciples themselves.

A lack / limited response to feedback about a mass coordinator's behavior resulted in parents being unwilling to let their children become / serve as altar servers. There is an inner circle of individuals serving at masses, discouraging others who would like to participate. Music quality, except for the folk group, is discouraging - everything is played at a common tempo, regardless of what the music calls for and that makes participation of the congregation difficult.

Youth ministry and young adult ministry is non-existent - creating a question as to whether we value the future of our church. It feels like our focus on social justice and ministry in the community at large is out of balance with taking care of the parish.

It still feels that we are not operating in the best interests of the Elmira church but are really operating in the best interest of each parish community. While there is some sharing, mass schedules are not set with Elmira in mind but each parish. I see more and more parishioners migrating to St. Mary our Mother - it provides a more complete ministry and sacramental experience.

I attended the parish meetings. The MOST important comment was from a woman who spoke about the need for the Catholic Church to look into what is drawing people especially young families to the Evangelical churches!!!! I think this needs to be done with US Catholic Bishops. We are losing not only priests in retirement we are losing families! Very sad to me.

Some of the questions speak to a variety of staff. Some do better than others and some Parishes do better than others. Like to see more uplifting experiences. We are losing our young folks!!

The amount of conversation before and after Mass is distracting. The Masses themselves are prayerful & moving. I view the noise as part of the "interior environment of the church". I do, however, love the interiors of our church buildings.

The effectiveness of the leadership is negatively impacted by the scope of what they are asked. We have fantastic priests who truly care about their parishes and work very well together to maximize their

reach. But if the goal is to build up and revitalize these parishes (that is the goal, right?), we need more clergy here.

I'm very concerned about what is happening in the parishes in Elmira. I understand that there are more priests in Rochester but they won't be shared with Elmira. I won't contribute to Catholic Ministries Appeal as all the money benefits Rochester

Because St. Mary Our Mother parish could be losing their pastor through retirement within the next 3 - 4 years, I feel they should be included in this consolidation process. I feel that when the SMOM pastor retires, there should be and will be a Chemung County Catholic parish formed, as we have seen done in Steuben, Tioga and Schuyler counties. Forward thinking should include the demographics and concerns of the Horseheads parish, too.

felt the question were repetitive kept feeling I had already answer that question

Father Rick is an amazing pastor who shows love and compassion to everyone. The churches are beautiful and well taken care of. Arlene and her choir make beautiful music that enhances Mass. Most staff are welcoming and helpful.

Many need to be reminded we are people of the WAY!

On the whole, I believe in my heart that our parishes are open minded to the members of each congregation and the mission of compassion, integrity and promoting inner spiritualism is of the highest caliber.

we need to put aside the barriers that we have between the churches. Why our church versus theirs? Who has masses vs. those who don't Are we aware of the fact that our priests go out to the nursing homes. We need to know where these masses are being said to support our fellow members who are infirm. Our responsibility as a Catholic, Christian and Human being is to do God's work. A priest is not the answer he's our coach to direct us. He needs support.

I appreciate the availability of masses esp the weekday (noon) on mon and fri and thurs pm. If there are a limited number of priests available which we expect, perhaps the church at St P & P could remain open for Visits between the Noon hour and One pm on those days. A volunteer attendant could oversee the hour and perhaps a Rosary be Said or Stations of the Cross or the Church could just be Open for Meditation

There is no perfect solution for our concerns, but we pray and ask for guidance from the Holy Spirit, we will find a model that is best for "most" parish members

It was difficult to identify only 2 or 3 out of several very important options. Enhancing our area of worship could be done in a variety of inexpensive but effective ways. We need more opportunities to gather together socially so we get to know one another. People who attend one mass often do not even recognize people who attend another mass.

I especially appreciate the cooperation of the parishes in various activities. It makes them available to more people.

need programs to reach catholics not attending church need programs for the lost 18 to 30 group
need quiet masses no or limited music need sermons about daily life where are all our little children
maybe we need a quiet room or babysitting

1. The music is slow and boring. They sing the same songs over and over again. They are not uplifting at all. One verse would be sufficient.
2. The sermons are terrible.
 - A. Do not read them.
 - B. Do not start with a joke.

C. Do not repeat the readings or Gospel.

D. Do not include personal stories.

E. Preach more on Catholic teachings, traditions, and the First Great Commandment instead of the Second.

3. The Pastors should alternate writing an article in the bulletin every Sunday as a way of communicating with the people of the parish. Not a spiritual instruction type, but rather a personal type article to make the people feel like you care.

You are assessing the current church statue, what you should be asking is ideas how to improve the current situation, such as to bring lapsed Catholics or non Catholics to workshops asking active Catholics to come with them. Few years ago you invited non Catholics to come but not made it clear that the active parishioners should come with them at least to the initial. meeting.

Youth program. Relationship building

We have a house in Auburn, NY. that community closely resembles Elmira, ie; prison in town same size of community. The couple of noticeable differences are the mass schedule times- in Elmira St. Mary's and Blessed Sacrament have the exact same mass times. I would think they would be staggered for example one have an 8 and one have a 9. Also in regards to the homilies that are given in Elmira the homilist in Elmira talks for 20 minutes which loses a lot of the attention span, whereas in Auburn they talk for 8-10 minutes and still get their point across.

there is a need for an active senior group

Having more enriching programs for young adults, men and women, stronger RCIA programs (leaders), getting young families involved in parish life would be what we need. Expanded hours for confession and programs to reach out to fallen away Catholics. Reaching out to the divorced, those considering the Catholic faith. Strong, relevant, and deeply Catholic homilies that challenge the parishioners to change their lives! Greater support for our Priests from the laity is needed.

I would like to know more about the staff positions at the parishes. Specifically, if these are paid positions, how do the positions, number of hours worked and rates of pay compare with other parishes in the Diocese?

Holy Family School is currently housed on St. Mary's campus. Who owns the school building?

I am very concerned about the increasing violence in the neighborhood around St. Mary's Church.

Is/Should this be a factor in determining the future of that campus?

I see and definitely agree that "Areas for Elmira-wide Planning" should be involved with the issue of security and physical surroundings of Holy Family School. Decisions about where the school is housed and which of the Elmira church buildings or properties are kept (vs. placed for sale) need to be made relative to, rather than independent from, each other.

One of the Pastoral Planning documents is titled "Possible Models for Priest Appointment and Parish Configuration." How likely is it that Bishop Matano will accept these possible models, rather than another of his own choosing? For example, it is within his authority to decide that there would be one Elmira Parish with one Pastor and no Parochial Vicar. Do we have any assurance that the "Possible Models" being considered are ones that Bishop Matano would accept?

It has been emphasized that there will be opportunities for those without computer access or familiarity to be able to complete this survey. How that will be done needs to be in the bulletin and announced from the pulpits immediately. I am completing this survey on October 30th, and I believe that information should have been announced in churches this weekend. I know it wasn't at 10:30AM Mass at St. Mary.

Has the idea of trying to sell all the Catholic buildings/churches in the Elmira area...and seeing which one God wants us to get rid of...been explored?

effective homilies that bring in up to date issues. one concise enough to send the message but not so drawn out it makes your mind drift off course. We need to survey members of the parish and encourage them to donate to the church to keep it alive and well.

I don't think any of the questions asked will help with our planning process. I don't think you should ask any questions that combine clergy and lay staff.

I am sure this is being considered, but please keep in mind that if a church is to be closed, St. Mary's is the only Catholic Church on the Southside of Elmira . Yes there are many bridges, but I still believe it is an important consideration. Especially since last year during an ice storm two of the bridges were shut down and travel home was difficult.

Why have we not received regular quarterly updates about the fiscal position of the Parish? What is being done to liquidate building assets no longer used? Have we looked at selling some of the rectory buildings as well as church buildings?

I grew up in the St. Mary's parish. I went to Grammar School there and High School at Notre Dame. I received all of the Sacraments at St. Mary's. I have seen a number of Priests come and go but the parish remained the same, friendly, family-like atmosphere, where all were welcomed no matter what their station in life was.

I think Father Scott, Deacon Al, and our cantor do a fabulous job!

I love the "loose change" idea from Blessed Sacrament. And I think that if anyone could organize a bottle return for people like myself who would just donate them rather than redeem them, that could help the parishes and/or the community.

There are members of the parish who, if asked for more than money, might be able to be more supportive of our ministries, or develop new ones.

As a young adult who grew up in the area, left the area to attend a Catholic university, and moved back after finishing school, I am continuously frustrated by the culture in the Elmira Catholic parishes for several reasons.

I feel entirely neglected as an age demographic (I'm a single woman in my 20s). While there are events scheduled for the parish community, they do not make an attempt to cater to my demographic. In fact I've heard talks presented as, "This is a great talk for everyone: children, retirees, married couples, and families." There is no mention of single adults, let alone young adults. It seems like the parish is assuming that just because there aren't many young adults that attend the parish, there shouldn't be any events offered for those in attendance or to attract others back to the Church. Because of this, the impression is made that the parish doesn't care to attract or keep my demographic. Furthermore, there are few, if any, activities scheduled after work (they're clearly catered to retirees), and there aren't opportunities scheduled for volunteering or learning more about my faith at all. If there are retreats and opportunities for after work, I'm unaware with them, and I regularly take a bulletin or look online.

I also have seen significant declines in ministry. There seems to be a group of core parishioners who are Eucharistic ministers, lectors, and altar servers at Mass, and it seems impossible to break into this group. In fact, an impression is given that other people are not wanted. I've spoken to several people who have given up their ministerial positions at Mass because they feel they are not wanted, since they are not scheduled or supported. Overall, it is not a hospitable environment. In fact, this has prevented me from signing up for ministry in the first place.

With regards to support of vocations, we are very supportive of priestly vocations. For the past two summers, we have had seminarians spend the summer in the parishes. Prayer groups are organized on their behalf, and petitions for priestly vocations said regularly at Mass. However, there are never prayers for sisters, missionaries, or lay people who work for Catholic charities, schools, hospitals, etc. These groups are equally vital to spreading the Catholic word and message and, yet, they are rarely brought up or prayed for. As a woman, the lack of support for nuns is especially disconcerting and sends a silent message that vocations for women are not as vital as priests. Our parish should support all vocations equally; at this point, they do not.

I take pride in my Catholic faith, and would never consider leaving the Church because of my

frustrations. However, I am very frustrated overall and am considering becoming a parishioner at another Catholic parish in the area, such as Saint Mary Our Mother or the Corning parishes.

A ray of sunshine I see in the Elmira parishes is Deacon Al. He is a wonderful resource and prayerful person, and I enjoy talking to him. He is constantly reaching out to others and including them. He and Mesina plan events on their own and work hard to make the parish open and welcoming to all. If Deacon Al were to leave, I would leave the Elmira parishes in an instant.

There needs to be more awareness of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist, because that is what we as the community of believers are striving for in our lives. We long for Christ's presence. We also need to hear more about the Eucharistic Adoration Chapel in St. Casimir's Church. There is a great Spiritual protection with the true presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. We also need to hear more about the Blessed Virgin Mary. For it was by Her that the Son of God was born. It is by the yes of the Virgin Mary that the Son of God was born. She is the Mother of God, and she is the Mother of the Church. By Her intercession, she leads us to Her Son.

Christ the Redeemer has THE MOST spiritual and communal activities and WELCOMES! we ESPECIALLY look forward to a homily that has a very spiritual basis and/or refers to the readings. Father Scott and Deacon Al Pacete go above and beyond in this area! We love to hear the interpretation of Father Rick and Father Desocio and Father Linsler. we are very lucky in our Elmira Catholic Churches and are doing more and more in our parish, due to the positive items I've noted on this survey. Of course, the reality of two priests for 6 parishes (AND OVERSEEING THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL) must be faced! If St. Mary's completely disregarded the cost-cutting measures that were recommended AND Blessed Sacrament has more expenses than income (?!?) then there will be high fiscal responsibilities. I think the good attendance at the three meetings is a great start toward the future!

Christ the Redeemer DOES THE MOST WONDERFUL job in all areas. Father Scott is a TREASURE AND DEACON AL & MESINA AND JEAN !

It is too bad that this is an OLD TOPIC that has never been addressed. The same ole from 5 years ago

1. At times it is not possible for one to actively volunteer. It would be great to have a "ministry of personal prayer"-this is greatly overlooked and prayer is much needed! 2. We need to have a way to identify parishioners who have lost loved ones in other parishes. Both my parents were anointed by one of our priests (in Elmira hospitals), both died shortly after, I did not approach the office at the time as I was too overwhelmed but could have used parish support.