



GRASS ROOTS LISTENING SESSION

St.Bonaventure parishioner responses - sorted

Prepared for: St.Bonaventure Parish council

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Dear Parishioners,

This year the St. Bonaventure Parish Pastoral Council has undertaken a project to build on the parish's strengths in order to improve our communities' spiritual life. The first step was the Grass Roots Listening Sessions we conducted in February through March of this year. Included in this report is a summary of the responses collected from our parishioners.

1600 Acadia Drive SE
Calgary, Alberta T2J 3B3
T 403-278-7556

msubasic@mac.com
www.rstbonaventureparish.ca

The first step in the Grass Roots Listening Sessions process was to document what people felt their dream parish would look like. Then we asked them what they liked about St. Bonaventure parish, and what was being done well. The final question was a searching one to identify gifts, and talents that people wanted to bring forward and share with others in the parish. The goal of the initiative was to continue improving our parish and growing and better serving our faith community, and taking St. Bonaventure Parish from GOOD to GREAT.

With the new church year ahead of us, the real work begins. The feedback in this document has been sorted into general categories, any of which can be taken on as projects by Parish Pastoral Council. This information as well as initiatives chosen as initial projects should be communicated to the parishioners through our church bulletin and website. The process in going from GOOD to GREAT should involve everyone. Providing feedback was only the beginning. The common thinking that THEY will do this is correct. All of us as a whole parish constitute the THEY.

Yours in Christ,

Michael Subasic
Parish Council Chair



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SECTION-1

Introduction

The following sections are general categories to group similar comments from parishioners. The comments are entered exactly as collected from parishioners. The complete set of responses is attached as Appendix A to this document.

Hospitality

Responses that generally fall under the category of Hospitality are found here.

- It would be an extension of my own home, and be just as inviting, comfortable, and open to guests and a lot of fun.
- Leave people be free, maintain the welcoming spirit
- communication needs to be better - let people know the amazing things we do.
- knowing people better, coffee helps
- having more parish members doing more things (same people tend to get involved)
- Inclusiveness
- Father moving around during different masses to distribute the eucharist
- recognizing birthdays, anniversaries, blessing these people, calling out guests at mass, getting a blessing by the priests
- at the leaving they said have a safe trip, and they really made you feel welcome...
- they did sign language for the deaf - do we know if we have deaf people here
- a mass where you don't want to leave the church because it's so inviting and welcoming, making it a true celebration, instead of obligation
- an invitation from the knights/parish to support young girls who may be in trouble Pro-Life
- someway of knowing who the new members are
- people knowing who you are
- something for unity to allow people to get to know each other to get people to recognize each other, personal outreach
- introductions at the sign of peace or at least at the bigger masses
- would have announcements before mass
- a happening place for all ages, where everyone feels welcomed & wants to be involved in order to grow in their faith
- well informed and welcoming office staff
- My dream parish would be one where all of God's people are welcomed and accepted, no matter where they are in their personal faith journeys. Those who darken the doors of the building only at Christmas or Easter, or those who are not practicing but are bringing their children for sacraments are just as awesome in God's eyes as those who attend Mass every day. I think if they are good enough for God, they are good enough to deserve our open arms as well
- Jesus says I call you by name.... the greeting when you come in the church, some parishes say hi I'm a visitor, or a greeting before mass, it could be changed each week.
- we could be more welcoming to people we don't know, when new people come in we need to introduce
- sharing birthdays, confirmations, marriages and announcing them at coffee...
- creating a forum of open sharing within groups
- Use the narthex for what it was built for. Gathering before/ after the mass while leaving the church proper for prayer.
- Respect the beliefs/ needs of all.
- new parishioners (and new to Canada) find the parish is vibrant and husband joining Knights helped family meet new people and make connections in parish
- we enjoy the pancake breakfasts



- priests need to show they support the parish events and the turnout will be better; announcements after mass are very important to market our upcoming events, such as Grass Roots input, missions, youth activities; not everyone reads the bulletin or checks the website
- we do pancake breakfasts well.
- making parishioners feel very welcome
- we are a welcoming parish (from Midnapore family)
- enjoy coffee and socializing after mass
- it is a fantastic parish
- ushers are doing a very good job in seating people
- we are a welcoming parish
- I think that this parish has done a good job in strengthening its hospitality. Coffee after Mass is always appreciated!
- we have many good things going on
- Monday morning coffee.
- good community
- coffee after mass

Youth

Responses that generally fall under the category of Youth are found here.

- Important for children of all ages to see us doing things together
- Key to be able to have kids together with parent's when they do events
- all priests should address kids and call them down to the front
- more youth stuff (younger youth)
- finding ways to make kids want to be more of a part of the parish
- special masses for younger children/families to teach them
- more events for older kids
- homilies need to be tailored for younger adults, change the style every once in a while
- youth to do rosary and stations of the cross in the mass, do plays for Christmas, movie nights
- kids who could play instruments at any of the masses
- choirs for younger kids (kids from our parish do this at other parishes)
- we would have a youth mass, don't label it as such, mix it up
- retreats for kids
- Nice to see kids involved in ministries and the mass, more altar servers just to be a part of it to create unity for the kids
- faith building things for kids, prayer cards, games etc...
- more opportunity for recycling (cans, paper, cardboard) - youth take initiative on this?
- would have a children's or youth choir
- young adult ministry, would need coordinator for young adults (18-35): single, married, divorced (with or without children)
- many activities for children - if children want to come to church, families will attend
- more youth involved as readers, ushers, altar servers, etc.
- at school, children would be challenged to be involved in their parish, also to do some charity work and volunteer
- parish-linked schools teaching sacramental preparation, altar server workshops and reader workshops
- there would be more timeslots for youth events, Tuesdays aren't always best.
- having a children's liturgy to have a more inclusive mass for younger children, and there are liturgies for young children
- also songs at the children's level
- need more younger crowd
- Bring on the buzz, maybe not at all masses but at the youth mass. Inspire more conversation/ community spirit between parishioners.
- more on children's liturgy



- catechism returned for children that don't go to catholic school using the mandated program
- more things the teenagers could be allowed to do in and around the parish.
- young adults like contemporary Christian music, like "Kailey Rain". How about if parish sponsors a musical event for young adults in Calgary? we have a contact willing to help with this
- want more young adult activities
- good activities for youth
- grandchildren, like when the children go out in the liturgy
- *** the big spruce tree out front is the children's tree - in 1982 it was planted, children's names are in a book are buried near the tree (Lucille Raizada) her husband planted it
- coming alive camp for kids is very good
- trying to address the needs of the young under 6
- summer camp is fantastic, camp coming alive to address the needs of our young.
- Rainbows program for kids from 5-14
- the way Father Wilbert speaks to the children as they go out for the children's liturgy reminding all of us about some basic beliefs and traditions like praying before meals and bedtime
- The children are respected and made to feel welcome.
- loves what Father does with the Children and that they contribute to mission mexico during the mass, it makes them part of the mass...

Parish-Community

Responses that generally fall under the category of Community are found here.

- It would accomplish a lot of good in the community, with every group in the parish working together on larger events, not alone.
- Various groups would collaborate and work together on projects to elevate them to the parish level from the group level.
- My parish would have Spiritual Growth and making every parishioner a Saint as a top objective.
- It would be about communion with Christ, and we would all do our very best to act like disciples of Christ.
- Community to be extended from mass to our events.
- Having more of a spiritual connection with others in the parish
- Challenge building a community with a large group of people
- Parish to be like a family, where people love one another, and people are drawn in by wanting to be a part of the family
- Staying in touch.
- Doing things together and having things we can do together outside church - kind of like in ethnic community where everybody socializes regularly
- When everybody kneels during consecration
- baptisms and weddings and even funerals during sunday services to build more community
- to see more baptisms as part of mass
- emphasize church activity to be taken advantage of before meetings, parish council liasons need to communicate with various groups
- strengthen the ties between church and schools, incorporate events from one into the other
- kneeling for unity
- everyone would respect the church's property, sticker on the kneelers, to not put your feet up.
- suggestion box
- more spiritual instruction on a regular basis, so people could build a sense of community
- would like to have more volunteers volunteering
- an abundance of volunteers to man all activities
- the more you participate the more you get out of it
- happy, engaged (involved) people
- Ushers and Hospitality Ministers should be a mix of young and old people



- My dream parish would be one where we are united in the posture of the Mass. I know that this horse has been beaten to death, but I still find it heartbreaking when we as a congregation battle over this one. It is not resolved, and unfortunately likely never will be, but it makes me feel like it is an obstacle to the full participation of God's people. I wonder what visitors to our parish think? This is one thing that truly makes me feel sad.
- working collaboratively with other groups, all of them....
- start traditions - when kids are baptised we put up a scroll or sheep with their names on it michaelS doves etc
- uniformity of posture
- Appeal to vast groups, provide for the needs of the different groups. Look into the needs of the different groups.
- - Spiritual needs, Social needs, Supporting the needs of others.
- Enhanced community spirit.
- More people to volunteer (under point one).
- building community is important
- uniformity of posture, kneeling at the consecration so people can see if the the people in front of you are standing
- mission is a good idea
- CHARITABLE WORKS
- A few well supported ones which involve adults, older and younger children
- Charities that address the needs of our community, our city our diocese and the universal church
- COMMUNITY
- a community of believers, eager to volunteer their talents for the good of the Parish not for their ego
- a community that discharges its stewardship responsibilities to support the parish and diocese financially
- occasions of recreation and fellowship where the community is built, supported and encouraged
- an effective youth program focused on the faith (rather than or the social component) that is integrated into parish life and not a separate entity.
- minimal, if at all, criticism of the bishop and parish priests; constructive private criticism should always be practised when appropriate
- Investigation re how to engage Churches around us (Anglican, Baptist, United)
- We get a lot of good work done, Feed the hungry, Inn from the Cold, St Vincent De Paul, Mission Mexico and various events that support the community and our parish.
- mass without music, and mass with music to include everyone
- like Holy Week celebrations
- we offer many opportunities for parishioners to become involved in the parish
- as a whole we have generous parishioners
- we have marvelous dedicated volunteers, but could always use more
- like Mission Mexico collection for children
- Knights do a great job, families support pancake breakfasts

Family

Responses that generally fall under the category of Family are found here.

- Every event would be a family event and ensure that everything possible is done to help families attend.
- Everyone in the Parish would get to meet and know everyone else in the parish, kind of like in a family.
- Like Cheers where everybody knows your name, to feel welcomed, and to have children be welcomed as well
- a welcoming thing for new families
- welcoming many new families after a mass to welcome them to our parish
- each mass as a family unity, and get to know the different cultures of each mass
- would like to have parents participating, thus giving the example to their children - they will also want to be involved
- would have more opportunities during the week for young families to be active in church (eg. more days for mothers' group, K of C help with funding?)
- would sponsor family dances, bring your own snacks - could provide dance lessons (someone volunteered to coordinate this)
- more family centric activities



- Pancake breakfasts go well
- Skating parties go very well
- Mission Mexico meal excellent family event
- Mardi Gras great event
- Enjoying variety of ways to present the stations of the cross
- Soup & bun is great idea
- coffee after mass extends the community aspect of the parish, and helps to meet new people
- food at events helps bring in the children and families

Ministries

Responses that generally fall under the category of Ministries are found here.

- someone to be in charge of the altar servers for every mass
- Easter readings done by more and more people
- mariachi band, polka music at the different masses
- funeral mass music could be more varied, all music could be more varied
- saying the rosary on a regular basis...
- include in the word of God, what our various are doing, acknowledgement
- we should have confession lines that are quiet, people need to know
- lyrics of music on a flat screen
- Bible verses in the washrooms, on the walls of the parish, the kids did the stenciling
- easier music to sing to (congregationally friendly)
- seminar or discussion on how to make journals a catholic time management
- share information on all the library resources at St.Bonaventure
- would have a structured adult Bible study group in the evenings
- would have guest speakers teaching our faith
- sponsor Catholic refresher course (Catholic catechism for cradle Catholics): we would like to have theme nights to discuss different topics and a could have a question bin for discussion questions - Catholic trivia
- That every member of the Parish is alive in the Spirit and committed to the proclamation of the Gospel.
- grand piano, Spanish hymns, quiet meditative music during Communion rather than only singing throughout
- My dream parish would be one where the liturgies offer more of an opportunity for participation and less of an opportunity for watching and private devotion. One particular example of a parish that has achieved this comes to mind. My family and I have been blessed with several opportunities to travel to Kihei, Maui, and, while there, have attended Mass at St. Theresa's Parish. "Attended" is not the right word to use - I should say we have actively participated in Mass at St. Theresa's. As we would enter the church, we were greeted and welcomed. Finding a place to sit involved being smiled at by the person you sat next to. The choir took advantage of the people waiting for Mass to begin to go over Mass parts and to share their philosophy that they were the leaders of song, but the congregation was the actual choir. We were all told what the American Bishops mandated for posture during communion, which made all of the visitors feel comfortable and able to focus on the liturgy rather than having to focus on "what to do". When it came time for communion, the people of God did not "go up", they surged with energy and anticipation towards the altar. After the final song, the congregation erupted into chatter and laughter and cheers - I never was able to leave that building without tears of joy. There was a real sense that we were being sent forth, not that we were being released from our weekly obligation. Their bulletin gave evidence, too, of a very vibrant and involved parish. Whenever we vacationed there, our weekend revolved around including Mass - going to church never once felt like an interruption to the vacation!
- My dream parish would be one where opportunities for the people of God to learn about the Mass would be common. I believe that if you know why something is being done, you are more likely to participate rather than watch. I think sometimes we tend to focus catechesis on children, and forget that there are a lot of cradle Catholics out here who go through the motions of the Mass because that's what we've always done, but have little idea of why we do it. This education is a tricky task, because people are busy and many do not have time to come for classes. I think Father Wilbert's weekly notes in the bulletin are excellent, and I think this would be a great opportunity to answer



questions people may have about the Mass in particular. I also know of a priest in the States who offers a 4 minute catechesis after communion. The more we know about the rubrics of our faith celebration, the easier it is to participate fully.

- learning more about other religions - to be tolerant, to understand theology, and thereby learn more about our own. - apologetics
- Saturday morning masses. If there are two priests.
- Kneeling during consecration.
- Show greater reverence at mass, ie. Music (Gregorian chant)
- Upbeat music – maybe not at all masses.
- Tune up the music.
- Perpetual adoration.
- Keep the mass holy.
- Stability of priests (as a positive)
- Scheduled ministries during the week day mass. (point 1)
- Commitment “Wednesday” for weekday masses. (point 1)
- Men’s group bible study. (point 1)
- Co-ed bible study. (point 1)
- Mission with Fr.Larry Lucienne would be awesome - founder of bosco homes
- Bible study of the next Sunday’s readings in the evening, informal
- Mission mexico hat back in the Narthex
- No collections on Good Friday, Palm Sunday readings... why do we crucify Christ in the readings on both Palm Sunday and Good Friday
- Like when Fr.Greg went around the church to wash the feet, the perception is that the same feet get washed all the time
- more people involved with good parish involvement, creating small Christian communities which would get together at the parish or at peoples home
- candles to be lit by parishioners
- What I think would make our good church a great church is to share the blood of Christ with all it's attendees. I think it would make it a great church to share in the body of Christ in quenching your thirst for him.
- Noon Mass:
- Have a meal before a mission or retreat
- Faith sharing activity in the evening
- Visiting orthodox family feels welcomed in our parish
- theology on tap?
- sunday evening dinners
- ethnic dinners
- good role model speakers (hockey players like Craig Conroy or football players like Rocco Romano)
- encourage new Canadians to attend prayer group, possibly in evenings for working people
- Evening Mass:
- is there a place where we could light candles?
- more praise and worship music for last song
- Thanks be to God followed by Alleluia
- Advent wreath at front of church instead of back of church
- invite ARISE to facilitate an evening of praise, worship and benediction
- Holy Week mission is a good idea
- more liaison required between schools and parish
- new initiatives in parish are all good, like bringing back the ringing of bells during consecration
- would like communion ministers to wear gowns again
- Tim Styles from the United States is a great speaker, he spoke at Holy Spirit in Calgary and should be invited to St.Bonaventure.
- Religious Courses like St.Modore or those initiated by Anna
- LEADERSHIP OF SERVICE



- especially from the pastor but also from the Parish Council Chair and the Finance Committee Chair; good communication; clear plans and decisions
- full, honest disclosure and transparent processes that inspire the confidence of the parishioners
- consistent with the magisterium of the Catholic Church in every aspect of parish life (there are enough well thought out guidelines tried and true over decades so we don't have to invent our own)
- WORSHIP AND PRAYER
- Liturgies that are dignified, unified, unhurried, reverent (some focused on our young people)
- Special support ministries playing their role eagerly, well and effectively
- Laity treating the sacred space with respect (dress, behaviour and participation)
- Traditional liturgies/devotions that support our faith - benediction, processions, Vespers, Rosary in May and October, Stations of the Cross.
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in a dignified, well decorated sacred space
- Sacred spaces decorated with taste and embracing some traditional elements - statues, icons
- DEEPENING THE FAITH
- A vibrant RCIA effective, modern program for adults and for youth with the Pastor's full engagement.
- An ongoing solid faith enrichment program to enhance our knowledge of the faith and its practice
- A mission at least once every two years
- A program of engagement with the schools within the parish that is serious and focused on catechesis.
- We have many many hours of adoration time available with the Blessed Sacrament
- spirituality here is very strong, having adoration is huge, having a mothers group is fantastic
- priests are open to hearing everyone
- sacristans are excellent here
- sacraments are done really well, lot's of opportunity for adoration, and confession
- daily mass is a blessing here as well.
- confession is great on Wednesday
- day of prayer was a great idea - it should be repeated
- evening retreats for the men at mount st.Francis have been very positive and good for community and spirit
- RCIA is doing very well, it creates a special bond that would be nice to have through the whole parish
- hospitality with coffee and something after mass is a very nice thing to have a nice
- initiatives on faith building are very nice to see, new traditions that can be added to families are nice to see
- Mother's Group is a gift to this parish.
- great priests
- good music at most of the masses especially Saturdays and Sundays
- so many groups to participate in
- excellent youth program
- it feels good to be here
- great staff in the office
- flexible mass times
- coffee is wonderful
- Like the idea of different people bringing up the gifts
- Soup and a bun during Lent for stations of the cross is a very nice thing
- bereavement ministry is good..
- Mission Mexico presentation with the children, and the way we support daily mass
- excellent ministries, it's a very busy church, days evening and weekends, with lots
- music ministry
- everybody is extremely friendly
- adoration chapel is an amazing thing that draws people from all over the city, university students, travellers
- good backbone of programs for our youth
- Christmas hamper thing is awesome
- Father Wilbert and Father Angelo are great with the kids
- embracing tradition is very good here
- teaching on the Father Son and Holy Spirit, and helping people understand it
- traditional music



- The choir attendance is nice to see
- K of C doing good work
- many mass times on Sat and Sun
- great variety of music at masses; enjoy choirs; choirs are fantastic
- many attend noon mass because of the music, others said it was a convenient time
- one said they like music at Sun night mass, they come from Midnapore
- this parish is willing to invest in their leaders through training, support and some help financially
- choirs are fantastic
- workshops for readers, altar servers, etc. are excellent
- chapel (for adoration & quiet reflection time) is open & available, was a God-send for this parishioner, he noticed there are 12 windows in chapel - symbolic?
- like music at Sunday night mass
- priests are open and welcoming
- Sharing the Word is great.
- The hospitality after Mass with coffee, etc has been a great boon to getting to know other parishioners.
- I love this parish and feel welcome and have felt so since I came here in Dec. 2003. Thanks to one and all.
- I think that this parish does a good job in offering opportunities for faith formation for adults and youth - if only there was a way to extend this invitation to those who do not attend Mass on a regular basis!
- I think that this parish does a great job preparing the children for their sacraments.
- I think that this parish does a good job in supporting their lay ministers - how can we work to encourage more new ministers? Is there a way we can focus on their faith formation as much as we focus on the "how to's"?
- Adoration for 5 days is great.
- Retreats.
- Numerous ministries.
- Good funeral mass support. ie music, food etc.
- screening for various volunteers it's good we do police checks - the diocese should be doing this
- the organization here is very good
- two fine priests
- youth work with Lucy is good
- committee's do a good job
- pancake breakfasts should be every sunday
- choir music is really good, should be
- adoration makes this place great
- mission mexico is great
- pancake breakfasts are great

Communication

Responses that generally fall under the category of Communication are found here.

- would acknowledge the good work that various groups in the parish are doing for the growth of the parish
- have activities of all parish groups on an interactive calendar, more working together on events (KofC/CWL/PPC, etc.)
- newcomer feedback - need more clarity on the books
- have the versus of scripture announced, bulletin and at mass,
- need to offer something at church for catechesis for parents of kids who don't go to catholic schools.
- mailouts from the parish are appreciated.
- mailing out of the sequence of events at Christmas - mention the website
- Identify our best catholic religion teachers in our schools, and get them to teach the teachers, by enabling the laity they we could all participate in teaching our Children better.
- trade show for all the ministries
- Eliminate some masses to allow the community to get together more.



- Suggestion box.
- Spread the news that the P.C. meetings are always open to everyone.
- Straight answers from the priests.
- want an explanation of things as they happen, why was the cross covered the Sunday before palm Sunday, an explanation of any changes
- an announcement in the bulletin of baptisms and whose it is so they could be there or not
- Need a new sound and projection system
- so many resources, and we need to be able to match them up with groups that need them.
- Would be nice if people were punctual for mass, disturbing having them seated during service
- new Canadians not always sure of Canadian church customs
- recommend one contact for new parishioners
- recommend parish directory with information on all services and parish groups
- more use of parish website
- parishioners provide questions in question box for Father Wilbert and Father Angelo
- bulletin is very good, youth section by Lucy is very good
- publish the link to Diocesan website in bulletin
- ADMINISTRATION
- an office and staff that are efficient but friendly and helpful - they serve a parish community not a business
- a good stewardship of the funds collected which involves not just balancing and explaining the books but why and how much we are spending.
- We have an amazing group of people that get everything done and are always willing to do more.
- We have many mass times with music to appeal to all ages.
- lay people can be involved in many things at the parish
- people who volunteer and actively participate do a really good job
- People being encouraged, pat on the shoulders
- Bulletin is looking very good
- The youth updates and program is really nice
- our website is good
- Bulletin is excellent
- would not seat people during the readings (doors should be closed and ushers not seat people during readings, especially at noon mass)
- do not like parish political approach (eg. praying for President Obama, support US and Canadian missions in Afghanistan, praying for soldiers, not acknowledging deaths in Palestine, etc.) - this person was OK with praying for deceased Canadian soldiers though
- Lucy is doing a great job, her bulletin insert is very educational for all, is involving children in a non-threatening way
- Communication between the administration' and the people is vastly improved. Thanks
- I think that the parish does a good job with communications. This is a tough one - because there are always people who are missed.
- communion under both species - request some information on the option especially children in the bulletin
- priests need to do a little more teaching
- the lighthouse CD's are awesome
- Youth news letter. Talks very well.
- fathers blurb.
- Community involvement