



Our Lady of Lourdes Church
One Eagle Rock Avenue
West Orange, New Jersey 07052
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*Summary of Father Jim Ferry, Pastor
regarding 2019 Parishioner Surveys - response, ver. 7*

Date: October 4, 2019

Dear Friends,

I am very grateful for your support and prayers for Our Lady of Lourdes. I write to you now to offer this summary of responses as of September 30, 2019. The survey questionnaire is now closed for comments. You are welcome to make further comments by contacting me via phone, e-mail or in person.

In total, we received __33__ responses to the survey, both online and in paper format.

This summary of responses is in two sections:

- 1. What was rated positively.**
- 2. What were noted as desired changes / comments.**

For brevity, I have tried to consolidate similar comments.

In Christ's Peace,

Father Jim Ferry, Pastor

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(Section 1) What was rated positively

1. It is my church "home".
2. I feel a comfortable accepting attitude; I have been so touched with the acceptance and friendliness of the Lourdes parishioners; friendly priests and parishioners; Friendly welcoming people; Sense of community
3. Church is always beautiful.
4. Daily mass.
5. Daily Mass in Chapel
6. Beautiful place for reflection; very nice and peaceful when praying.
7. A place to celebrate life on many occasions.
8. Holy Family Room makes it possible for me to come with 2 small children.
9. Nametag Sunday.
10. Activities.
11. Parking convenience.
12. The diversity of the parishioners and their accepting nature to those of other cultures, and willingness to share in their own cultures.
13. There are a lot of diverse activities for all ages.
14. Music
15. The mural.
16. Homilies
17. Young people as altar servers.
18. OLL is truly a special place. It has diversity in culture, values, economic levels, yet we are a loving happy family. We are accepting of other people's diversity, and sympathetic to each other's life struggles, celebratory of each other's milestones and successes, and have taken to heart the task of sharing our time, talent and treasures. No one has the heart Lourdes has.
19. Father Jim is very approachable and welcoming;
20. Father Jim is doing the best to increase attendance, like nametag Sunday, reaching out to parishioners, and acknowledging extra donations.
21. Thank you for the town hall meeting. Very informative and helpful.
22. Funeral Mass and celebration - the ministries of celebrating Funerals - well done.

(Section 2) What were noted as desired changes / comments

▶▶ 2.1 Ideas Regarding Recognition of New & Current People

- Welcoming program for new parishioners.
- More explanation of ways to get involved.
- Greater effort should be made to be more welcoming to visitors

(Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Yes, we will discuss these ideas at our Pastoral Council and future Town Hall meetings.**)

▶▶ 2.2 Ideas Regarding Schedule

Have a 4 pm Mass on Saturday. (Response of Father Jim Ferry: **It is our experience that 5:30 pm works well now for our community; an earlier hour will be noted for future consideration.**)

Have a 5 pm Mass on Saturday. (Response of Father Jim Ferry: **It is our experience that 5:30 pm works well now for our community; an earlier hour will be noted for future consideration.**)

1st Friday Adoration should be 5 – 9 pm. (Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Hours were recently adjusted from 6 to 10 pm to 5:30 – 9:30 pm.**)

A weekday mass at 7 or 7:15 am. (Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Our attendance at 7am Mass when it was discontinued in 2016 was averaging fewer than 5 people.**)

Sunday evening mass. (Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Special Archdiocesan permission required to establish Sunday Evening Mass.**)

Need Eucharistic Ministers @ 7 am mass (Holy Day) & 7:30 am Mass (Sunday)
(Response of Father Jim Ferry: **With a smaller assembly of people at early morning Sunday Mass, I discontinued having additional ministers because Holy Communion was simply too rapid; I believe we benefit from time for reflection.**)

►► 2.3 Desired Participation Changes

1st Comment: More participation at Liturgies; Better attendance at Mass. Have families/children more involved with liturgy; Offer more services to young people. (*Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Yes, we are trying to connect our families with children to the Sunday Mass and to connect the schedule of Religious Education to Sunday Mass so that more children will attend. Also, our March 2019 and November 2019 “Inter-generational Event” in Religious Education.***)

2nd Comment: Training and workshops for lectors. (*Response of Father Jim Ferry: **We encourage all lectors to come to training at the parish and at archdiocesan events.***)

3rd Comment: More young adults to attend. (*Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Yes, we would like to connect our parish with more young adults.***)

4th Comment: Pilgrimages/ Bus trips. (*Response of Father Jim Ferry: **We would like to consider this for future events.***)

5th Comment: Create spaces for prayerful reflection. (*Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Yes, we have a beautiful property and hope that our parish can now and in the future offer these spaces – we have room to grow here.***)

6th Comment: “Nametag Sunday” is not sufficient as a way to connect with people and for the pastor/priest to know individuals by name. (*Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Yes, I agree that Nametag Sunday is only a starting point for the priest/pastor to know people’s names and for parishioners to know each other. While introductions are helpful, it is also incumbent on the pastor to follow up and learn not only individual names but also about the people of the parish directly.***)

7th Comment: Could a divider be put in the church to have the assembly of people sitting in the front of the church? (*Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Yes, I agree that having people sit in the back pews away from the altar when the church is not full is not ideal. Also, I recognize that some come to church with less frequency, some people are not comfortable sitting toward the front, and some are seeking moments of solitude during Mass that the pews in the back provide.***)

▶▶ **2.4 Structural Improvements and Repairs**

1st Comment: Chair lift or elevator to Connor Hall.

2nd Comment: Facility Repairs - Parking lot

3rd Comment: Church front plaza and placement of eagle statue relative to view of church (could be an obstacle to view of church).

(*Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Due to underground water – an actively running stream -- and “commercial” nature of the building, both the elevator (lift) and chair have been estimated at over \$200,000. We would have to do a capital campaign for the parish but are not able to undertake this with our other fundraising objectives both for the parish and archdiocese; the parking lot improvement is a more urgent matter also estimated at \$200,000 cost total. We may have to do this over 2 years.***)

▶▶ **2.5 Celebration and Communication**

1st Comment: I observed at another parish, the priest would acknowledge birthdays, anniversaries and also first time attendees announced at start of mass and people clap. (*Response of Father Jim Ferry: **This special recognition is something we endeavor to do at social gatherings outside the main Sunday Mass.***)

2nd Comment: Occasionally feature the life of a saint in the bulletin. (*Response of Father Jim Ferry: **We have started to do this.***)

3rd Comment: Offer 'regular' Religious Education without parents.

(Response of Father Jim Ferry: **At the current time in Grades 1-5 and First Communion we are doing a family-based religious education program – with the parents. At Grade 6 and higher, young people attend without their parents.**)

4th Comment: Better, more modern music; A lower key for hymns would be helpful; Difficult to hear the number of the hymn

announced. (Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Yes, our Music Ministry is looking into some options for new hymns and/or hymnals to give us new choices.**)

5th Comment: Ushers and dress code. (Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Notation has been made for our ushers.**)

6th Comment: Lead a scripture group, share Cursillo meetings and lead guitar/singing on Saturday evenings. (Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Notation has been made and our Music Ministry would be glad to speak to any musicians willing to volunteer.**)

7th Comment: Update ministry booklet (Response of Father Jim Ferry: **Yes, this is a work in progress. We are trying to publish all the volunteer activities available for 2019-2020. These are now published on our website, LOURDESWESTORANGE.ORG. Find "About Our Parish" tab, click "Volunteer Service at the Parish". If you need this document sent to you or printed for you, or have any questions, please call the rectory office 973.325.0110.**)

8th Comment: Civic Engagement (Response of Father Jim Ferry: **This term 'civic engagement' was not defined by the respondent but we certainly recognize we have a responsibility to give back and to act according to the corporal works of mercy, Gospel of Matthew chapter 25, the Beatitudes and other teachings.**)