



Saint Patrick Church
Chatham, New Jersey

Parish Life

JUNE 2007

"BUILT TOGETHER INTO A DWELLING PLACE OF GOD"

From your pastor, Fr. Ed

14 Days to Go!

You know the feeling well: you've sent out the invitations and are waiting to see how many RSVPs you are going to receive. Then on the day of the party, the question is how many people will actually turn up! I've had some of those feelings myself since we first sent out a sample survey to 200 registered parishioners over the age of 18 and then mailed parish feedback forms to all registered households. This past week we held the first two Listening Sessions, another vehicle for you, dedicated parishioners of St. Patrick Parish, to contribute your experience and input as we build up our faith community and develop a pastoral plan for the year ahead.

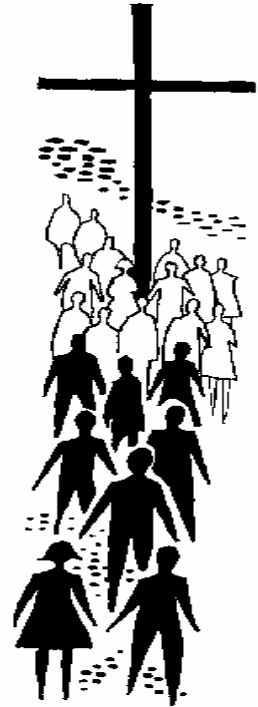
The time has flown since we began planning this data gathering process over four months ago. Now we are only 14 days away from our deadline for making your returns. After that, we begin the analysis phase before reporting and implementing our new plan in the fall.

My sincere thanks to those of you who have responded to the invitation and have shared your thoughts on the future of the parish. Over 44% of the sample surveys have already been returned. Over 150 individuals, couples or families have submitted their feedback which provides us with a substantial amount of data to inform our decisions on future plans and priorities.

I encourage those of you who have not yet returned your survey or feedback form to please do so by Saturday, June 30.

In addition to surveys, you may also find it valuable to share your thoughts in a focus group of fellow parishioners. **You can still attend our final Listening Session this Friday, June 22 from 3:00-4:30 PM** in the parish center. Baby-sitting will be provided.

Finally, please continue to pray for our parish community, that we may be faithful disciples and work together to be built into a dwelling place of God.



PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

SAINT PATRICK PARISH COMMUNITY, nurtured by the Eucharist and the Word of God, recognizes our responsibility to be a welcoming community. We acknowledge our mission to:

- ◆ pass on our Catholic traditions;
- ◆ strengthen the spiritual life of all parishioners;
- ◆ serve those in need;
- ◆ give witness to the Gospel;
- ◆ reach out to those who are searching for a community of faith.

Parish Offices: 41 Oliver Street, Chatham, New Jersey 07928

Please visit us at www.st-pats.org or contact us at 973-635-0625 or via email info@st-pats.org

*From Michael Brough,
Co-chair of the Pastoral Council*

Spring is a joyful time in our parish. Since Easter, 28 babies have been baptized, 143 children have received their First Holy Communion, 76 young people were sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of confirmation, 10 new families have joined the parish, and over 115 Masses were celebrated in our church. Other milestones include our celebration of Fr. Gabe's 50th Anniversary of Ordination and our congratulations to Fr. Dariusz on his appointment as Pastor of St. Stephen's in Paterson.

Then there are the less visible, yet no less vital aspects of parish life. Every day, faithful parishioners gather to pray the Rosary and celebrate the Eucharist. The homebound are visited, anointed or receive the Eucharist. On First Fridays, parishioners gather to pray in silence before the Blessed Sacrament. Throughout the day, people pop into our (thankfully) open church to pray. Big buddies pray for their younger parishioner partners. Our amazing young people spend a weekend of prayer and community building. And so many other ways in which we live out our faith.

When I addressed all the Masses on the weekend of May 5-6, I pledged to read all the survey and feedback forms that were returned and to listen to all the input offered at our parish Listening Sessions. As Fr. Ed has noted, many parishioners have taken this opportunity for their voice to be heard. Survey rankings have been made, strengths and weaknesses have been identified, priorities have been proposed and people have provided an honest assessment of parish life here in St. Patrick's, Chatham.

This feedback has captured what we are doing well and can be doing better if we are to be a faithful and vibrant community of faith. Already, there are themes becoming clear. As expected, there is not unanimity on every matter, but in most instances, reasons are given and solutions proposed. Even the "don't knows" tell us about areas where we need to improve our communication efforts.

Thank you for your commitment to St. Patrick Parish. Thank you for taking the time to let us know what you think. Thank you for your support of Fr. Ed, the parish staff, and the pastoral council as together with all of you, we work to strengthen parish life and deepen our faith.

"Communities known for the vitality of their faith and for the quality of their service to people in need invariably inspire others to participate in their ministries and to be generous with their financial support.... Parishes that seek to promote gifts of time, talent, and treasure to support the mission and ministries of the Church should first demonstrate that they are welcoming communities with a commitment to preaching the Gospel and serving the needs of others."

*US Conference of Catholic Bishops,
Stewardship: A Disciple's Response
(2002), p60*

7 Building Blocks Of Parish Life

- 1. Worship*
- 2. Christian
Community*
- 3. Evangelization*
- 4. Teaching*
- 5. Service*
- 6. Leadership*
- 7. Stewardship*

If you have any questions about the parish pastoral plan or the parish's mission and ministries, please call Fr. Ed at 973-635-0625 or email PastoralCouncil@st-pats.org .