

Summary of Responses to Otari Parish Survey 2019

Question 1. Summary of responses to “*What do you value most from our Otari Parish Assets?*”

- Both Churches as places of worship.
- Lounge at St Thomas more.

Question 2. Summary of responses to “*How can we sustain the sustainability of our assets at Otari Parish?*”

There is was strong support for four main themes:

- **Regular maintenance of the assets is needed.** An overwhelming majority of respondents view that regular maintenance of the assets is required. This includes reviewing the use of clean and green energy (for example, solar panels, panel heaters, insulation, controlled switch for the heaters to save energy, review utilities providers). Funding from EECA for renewable energy could be looked at. One suggestion to effect regular maintenance is to have working bees helped by parishioners.
- A related theme suggested by respondents it to modernise the facilities so that it can be rented out at a reasonable rate (for example, convert the St Theresa’s hall kitchen into a commercial kitchen so it can be rented to entrepreneurs in the community). This will not only help with improved income for the parish but will also increase the value of our assets, and can also help with young entrepreneurs, migrants and refugees that are thinking to do food business.
- **Rationalise the number of Otari Parish assets.** There are a number of suggestions to sell some assets like St Thomas Moore Chapel, St Theresa’s Presbytery and use the McKeefry flats to house our Parish Priest and also consider it for temporary housing (rented out) for young Catholic teachers, newly arrived migrants and refugees. Possibly make better use of foyer and choir loft.
- **Increase people assets.** With the dwindling number of parishioners, and mostly older people attending masses (except for the migrant communities), there is a need to encourage the young people to attend mass. One suggestion is to strengthen the relationship, collaboration and partnership between and amongst the school, church and the community.
- **Develop an asset strategy.** There were suggestions to develop an overall strategy that takes into consideration a long term view (what would our parish look like in the next 30 years) and a medium term view (what would our parish look like in the next 5 years), and use this to consolidate/rationalise the number and use of the assets. This strategy would probably help inform how to address the key findings and themes identified above.

Question 3. Summary of responses to “How are your faith needs being met by the Otari Parish?”

- Atmosphere at St Thomas More.
- We are becoming traditional.
- Not a sense of belonging.
- Parish groups – could do more.
- Embracing biculturalism.
- Friendships help.
- Liturgy at St Thomas More.

Question 4. Summary of responses to “What more can the parish do to meet your needs?”

- Adult faith formation
- Times for Confessions
- Catechism basics
- More special interaction
- Part time youth worker
- Remember traditional ways
- Engage Youth more
- Parish Councils more prominent
- Mission to marginalised Homilies – visual aids more or other participation.
- Make youth welcome.

Question 5. Summary of responses to “What do you think the future of Otari Parish will be like in 15 – 20 years?”

- There will be fewer priests, consider Deacons, women priests.
- Multigenerational and multicultural.
- A community of faith hope and justice.
- Schools may close.
- A rediscovery of the ministry of the baptized.

Question 6. Summary of responses to “If the youth are the future of our church, what can we do to encourage them to be more active in our parish?”

- Really listen to them (don't talk down or give answers all the time).
- Consult them on different issues' interests are social justice, lesbian and gay issues etc.
- Ethnic groups in the parish seem to fair better with youth.
- Welcome them
- Change worship style – more youth friendly.
- Meeting opportunities for youth
- Support camps, e.g. Jesus4Real.
- We are old style in our worship and attitudes.

Question 7. Summary of responses to “As a parent, what legacy do you want to pass on to your children / youth of our parish community?”

- How to live life well
- Lead by example
- Love one's faith

- A follower of Jesus
- Personal relationship with Jesus
- Proud of their faith.

Question 8. Summary of responses to “As a parent, what do you do to pass on the faith to the youth of our parish?”

- By example – model one’s faith – (came through a lot).
- Support things they are involved with – school, church ministries.
- Prayer
- Family prayer
- Eucharist
- Seeking to involve them

Question 9. Summary of responses to “How can Otari Parish improve our relationship with the local community?”

There is very strong support for three main themes:

- **Outreach.** Showing compassion for others by fundraising, volunteering, providing events, contact and amenities for needy people. Create outreach centre and programs. More cooperation with other churches and organisations, e.g. foodbank.
- **Communication:** Communication with other churches, religions and organisations. To have better visibility and to consult. To use our newsletter for advertising local activities and events. To use Facebook. Use Karori road sign to invite people to events and have a changing Christian message. Use banners.
- **Networking:** Networking with other churches and community groups. To be aware of community groups and get involved. To get-together for services and events, including Parish Open Days. To have shared ecumenical celebrations. Attend each other’s services, for example St Thomas More and St Anne’s – Christmas and Good Friday masses.

Strong support was given for:

- Being open and welcoming. To be aware of needs and ask what we can do to help. To continue with relationships but look to develop new ones. To invite people to Church meetings and programmes.
- To work with schools on joint projects. To use school to connect with local community. Youth programmes.
- To encourage community to use facilities and shared resources. Use for community outreach. Develop collective strategies and pool resources with other Church communities. Co-sponsorship and collaboration of community events. Joint ventures.

Other ideas expressed:

- Have people's information (age, profession, ethnicity etc) in order to target services.
- Be aware of what is available in our community. Help newcomers to the area.
- Take lead in environmental issues, for example clean up Karori stream.
- Make right the scandals of the past.

Question 10. Summary of responses to “*How can Otari Parish improve our relationship with other Catholic communities?*”

All responses affirmed, in one way or another, that they appreciated the parish provides sacramental liturgies and celebrations. At the same time, and possibly based upon the realisation that Otari is currently a two-church parish, many respondents felt it is important that there is good communication among groups or would be groups.

So what, now what?

- The most supported idea was to have shared services, collective devotion, and meeting in each other's churches.
- Just as popular is to have social get-togethers, functions and events that we invite other parishes to.

Communication was a key concern in nearly all responses. As a part of that was the concern that some networks may be little known or overlooked. Additionally, some felt better communication was needed with other parishes in the diocese, including some that have a special function such as Ngakau Tapu. Some respondents admitted they did not know what particular groups do, or felt that groups they may be personally associated with were not sufficiently known

So what, now what?

- Consider advertising what is on, sharing our newsletters and events online and advertising what is available to parishes. Post information about different catholic communities.
- Share resources, material and spiritual. Shared liturgical workshops, share facilities, experiences, ideas, successes and best practices. Support poorer parishes.
- Communication would greatly assist in outreach to children and young adults.
- Ministries (between the two churches) swap occasionally so that Eucharistic ministers, readers etc, from one church would go occasionally to another church in the Otari diocese.

Although respondents saw “communities” in terms of groups that may already function or could potentially function within Otari parish, others saw also some “communities” as groups that are outside the Catholic Church, but still carry out gospel concerns such as care for the poor and rejected, as well as concern for the environment.

So what, now what?

- To work with each other. Have reciprocal visits and support social projects and initiatives. Encourage parishioners to be part of initiatives.
- Be genuinely welcoming, open and supportive and take an interest in other parishes and communities.
- By having close relationships between the same groups in different parishes such as parish councils.
- Through the schools. Schools have more opportunities to participate in parish.
- Ensure all worshipping styles are catered for.
- One suggestion was that the parish get involved in tree planting.

While mentioning communities for some respondents the fact that Otari is acting as and sharing pro-cathedral facilities was seen as positive because it made extra priests available.

So what, now what?

- More effort could be made to involve pro-cathedral parishioners in Otari activities such as shared, liturgies social function and shared meals.
- Some saw more opportunity for regular ecumenical liturgies.
- Priests help by celebrating Mass. Invite other parish priests to concelebrate.

Church-associated but not necessarily parish groups which respondents felt could be encouraged or developed more within Otari parish were St Vincent de Paul with its compassionate outreach, drive for membership of the Divine Mercy Group and the Parish Family Group, “Kapitarian” Prayer groups, and Couples for Christ.

Question 11. Summary of responses to “How can our Catholic Parish enhance our relationship with our local Catholic Schools?”

- A difficult question – perhaps revolves around the Sunday Mass
- There is. Strong relationship
- Catholic Women’s League - teaching children the rosary, and help with plant sale at School Fair
- Provide scholarships
- Priests are being seen around the schools now
- Non-attendance at Mass must not be seen as the only criteria of faith involvement
- Start a youth group
- Have a parish concert with school providing the items.
- Parish supports the school Gala
- Support school with resources
- Side by side mentoring
- Visits by priest
- Use school songs at Masses
- One class goes to Mass each week

Question 12. Summary of responses to “If you could change one thing in our parish, what would it be?”

- Current entrance and Foyer is too small, need to be enlarged, or create a new reception area (entrance) on the eastern side of the main church.
- St. Theresa is like a gymnasium or a shipping container.
- Improvement to St Theresa furniture, including Individual seatings at the front for accessibility and for elderly parishioners.
- More functions so people get to know each other better.
- More involvement from Younger Catholics, or Youth. More youth connections.
- More non-Mass Sundays run by lay people when priests are not available.
- We need more Volunteers to share the workloads. Or consider a paid position(s) for an overall ministries coordinator, youth ministries, etc.
- Increase the number for Parish Cleaners
- Get all families involved in the parish
- More connection between school and church. This could include more regular School participation in the Mass.
- Encourage meeting and talking to new people to ensure we know the members of the Parish. The use of name tags could help.
- Congregation to be more friendly & welcoming to outsiders, including greeters at each church for every mass
- Provide more opportunities for education in the faith
- Electric heaters at St. Theresa to be replaced with heat pumps, consumes less power.
- Get more overseas priests instead of lay people.
- If so much money is needed for the Cathedral, then close both the Otari churches.
- Free the Church Hall during the weekends for the youth and anything involving the Church activities all year round.

- An updated design for our website.
- To be more outward looking – Pope Francis and going out to the peripheries.

Question 13. Summary of responses to “Tell us – this is the opportunity to share any further ideas you have about Otari Parish?”

- Distinctiveness of the two churches is a good thing.
- Parish boundaries should be reconsidered.
- Sunday Mass at St. Thomas Moore to be later than 8:30 AM.
- Lay people to take leadership responsibilities.
- Encourage parishioners to attend the council meetings.
- Fundraising to help improve St. Theresa, and maintenance.
- Need full representations of all communities in the Council, or a larger consultation where every community is recognised.
- Involve our youth - how they are guided, in terms of connecting them with the Church.
- Sense of ‘belonging’ is sometimes missing - provide faith study sessions to develop faith of both parents and children.
- Building our relationships to help live our faith.
- Greeting people would develop sense of belonging.
- Utilize the multicultural nature of our community, including more multicultural mass.
- Stop selling the Parish’s Assets for our future generation and children.
- Close down McKeefry School for more space and facilities, and for community garden.
- Any idea of closing St. Thomas Moore will not help anyone in the Parish.
- Single chairs and get rid of the wooden pews.
- Do pronunciation of foreign words at Mass eg. Filipino/Tongan songs or Maori words
- Close St Thomas More - merge the two churches for more unity
- Communication – we are working out of ‘silos’.
- More multi-use of our resources, e.g. foyer during the week.
- Address homelessness - opening the Parish doors to the needy, homeless and migrants.
- Information Pack for new parishioners.