Responses to the Survey

“Caring for the People of St. Francis Seraph Parish”

A total of 80 surveys were returned

1. **What is your overall impression of how our parish cares for people who are poor e.g. allowing our church to be open every day for people to get warm, rest, use the bathroom, etc.?**

**89% of the responses to this question were pro.**

The following are samples of the responses:

--Right thing to do.

--Proud of belonging to a parish that responds to the needs of those people who are poor and homeless.

--It is greedy not to use a building which is used by the parish only several hours a week.

--We are obliged to do this if we are to imitate St. Francis.

--We are practicing what St. Francis preached.

--Happy we can do this.

--Very supportive.

--The reason I chose this parish is location and attentiveness to those who are poor.

--SFS practices Franciscan Spirit.

--SFS is doing more for those in need than anyone else.

--Best part of SFS!

--Thrilled!

--Jesus would welcome such people.

--By doing this we are following the call of the Gospel.

--Not to extend ourselves would make us hypocritical.

--This makes me proud to be a member of SFS parish.

--The “Open Door” policy of SFS is practicing what we preach.

--I like it.

--By opening our doors to people on the streets issues are to be expected, and we need to be attentive to that, but it’s the right thing to do.

--We are providing a vital resource, but we could be doing better.

--We are following Christ.

--Jesus would do the same.

--Good Christian way.

--Shows real respect for the humanity of the people who are in need.

--Support current church practices 100%.

--Given our location in OTR makes good sense.

--I think the church is doing a wonderful job not only with the church being open but also the school, meals, women’s program, etc.

--Having our church open says something about our values and ministry.

--Keeping our church open to our brothers and sisters who are homeless is something we should continue to do.

--A good combination\relationship SFS parish/SFS Ministries.

--The parish shows compassion.

--Homeless people have as much right to be at SFS as I do.

--Moral thing to do.

--Important part of our mission.

--I feel that the local people who are poor have more right to this space than I do.

--SFS provides essential services.

--It would be good if we were to engage people coming into the church so that we can help more.

**10% of the responses to question 1 were con**

--I feel the parish is invading the space of the day shelter through use on Sunday morning.

--Do our open doors without expectations or services actually undermine the efforts of other agencies? Are we a refuge from other agencies expectations?

--SFS is not qualified to run a homeless shelter.

--Services that the church is providing is probably doing more harm than good.

--Providing a pew to sleep in with no real assistance.

--Having homeless people in church presents a problem of bedbugs and other possible health pests such as lice, scabies, etc.

--We the parish does not have the social services or other resources to help these neighbors.

--St. Anthony Center should provide for the needs of homeless people.

 **2. How do you feel about homeless people being present in the church during our Sunday Mass? How does that affect your ability to worship?**

**79 % of those responding to question 2 had little or no problem**

The following are examples of the responses:

--I share my pew with a homeless person every week.

--The presence of poor people gives my prayer a greater sense of purpose.

--I have no problem with homeless people being present as long as they don’t threaten me.

--Homeless people may want to hear the Good New too.

--People may be experiencing issues, we need to reach out and offer assistance.

--The presence of homeless people enhances our experience and keeps their plight present in our minds as we pray together.

--Maybe they can learn something they didn’t know about our Heavenly Father.

--I have not been bothered. However, I tend to sit in the front

--It stretches my comfort zone, but that’s not a bad thing.

--It adds to my ability to worship.

--They seem to be respectful for the most part.

--Everyone is welcome as long as they are respectful and quiet.

--Their presence minimally affects our ability to worship or Sundays. It is the embodiment of the true church.

--Wonderful, reminds me of the mission of the Church of the fragility of life itself.

--All are Welcome. It can affect worship if someone becomes disruptive, but I haven’t really seen that happen.

--There can be some distractions. However, I think we are called to do this.

--I have had only positive interactions with the people at SFS.

--Most homeless people stay in the back so it doesn’t distract my ability to worship,

--It’s OK.

--Occasionally there are some distractions. Overall most are very respectful and I even see some connecting with our message and mission.

--Don’t mind this at all.

--It seems very un-Christian to ask the homeless people to leave so we can have Mass.

**18% of the responses were con:**

--A person who does not participate in the Mass should not be in the church.

--I wish the homeless people would respect the church during service time.

--The bathroom door slams during Mass.

--Don’t like the smell of pee.

--They need to show respect. Trash in the door way, seats are dirty. They eat and drink during services.

--It is our day for Sunday service. They do not belong there at this time.

--They lay all over, body order in the pews, germs and bugs.

--Homeless people are asked not to come into church during school activities, weddings, and funerals out of safety or respect. While I am not asking for the exclusion of these people at Mass, I would expect anyone in attendance to be participants. It is too much to ask that the space is treated as more spiritual than a rest stop on Sunday mornings during Mass. And is the end of Mass the time to re-open a day shelter? What hope do we have to create a parish community if we don’t have some gathering space available outside of Mass? `

--Homeless people should not be in church during Mass or any other time for fear of safety and bedbugs.

--I feel I can’t concentrate on listening to the reading, Gospel or homily.

--Homeless people in the church during Mass presents a safety issue while parishioners are present. It greatly affects my ability to worship.

--People walking in and out of church during Mass affects my ability to worship.

--I find the homeless people very distracting.

--concerned about bedbugs and order.

--People should participate in the Mass or stay outside.

--toilets continually flushing during Mass. Doors slamming. There should be no eating, no technology, no sleeping taking up entire pews.

--Must show respect.

--My ability to worship is effected when some are reclining on the pews or leaving large bags in the aisles.

--The homeless people show no respect.

--The church should not be open to homeless people on Sundays.

--SFS Ministries should have their lobby open on Sundays.

--I don’t know that the parish takes on the care for the poor.

1. **Do you have concerns about the cleanliness of the church?**

**65 % of the respondents had little or no concern**

With respect to the con’s people responded with a simple no.

**18% of the respondents had concerns**

The following are sample of the responses.

--People should shower before coming in for Mass.

--Inside and outside they do not respect the people or the church.

--They don’t care.

--Some of the neighbors have urine soaked clothing/alcohol smell/body order.

--We are not equipped to be a day shelter as we have not looked into or taken on the protocols necessary for that kind of operation. Without

Valid intake and cleaning protocols and a trained crew to do it, we are doing a disservice to the parishioners and anyone else who uses the space.

--Since the church was turned into a homeless shelter it is a mess.

--Absolutely, I have seen all kinds of wrappers, food crumbs.

1. **Do you feel safe coming to church?**

**88% of the respondents felt safe**

The following are samples of the responses:

--I would feel less safe coming to church at night.

--I would not come to church at night.

**10% of the respondents did not feel safe**

--I don’t know when things are going to flare up.

--Don’t want to leave anything in the pew when going to communion.

--There is an increased hostility and aggressiveness that many persons outside and inside have when asking for assistance is tiring and a growing concern.

--I am concerned that we are ill equipped should some situations arise.

--I feel in danger because the homeless people have mental issues as well as alcohol and drug issues.

--I don’t feel safe in church because homeless people are carrying something for protection, knife, razor knife, box cutters, etc.

--as a blind person, I would feel much safer if someone would stand with me outside as I wait for my ride.