**St Teresa of Avila**

**Qualitative Survey Results**

**Q: Reflecting on your personal experiences, what has helped you grow closer to God?**

**Themes are: Good Homilies; Like Fr. Frank, Parish Staff; Family Upbringing; Good Community; Good Religious Education; Ministry/Outreach; and Impact of Adversity/ Life Circumstances**

**Sample comments:**

* When I successfully pray. Prayer
* When Father Frank (our pastor) or Dean (our deacon) delivers his homilies. Always extremely thoughtful and bring me closer to God.
* Fr. Frank's homilies are pointed, heartfelt, challenging, and enlightening messages that always challenge me to live a more holy life 24/7.
* Participating in catechism for children
* Faith that I have built upon by attending mass
* Hard times; Divorce
* Generally...the community at St. Teresa. Specifically...Father Frank. His genuine care for others and ability to connect with the congregation thru his homilies drew us in 3 years ago.
* A smaller parish it was possible to actually get to know Father Frank and others and connect personally. It made us want to get more involved and volunteer once we felt like we had a family and not just lost in the crowd.
* Attending mass at St. Teresa and Father Frank's homilies
* Programs like Catholic Radio (Sirius) and Mother Miriam Confirmation sponsorship and prep
* Dealing with deaths of close family and friends
* My parents' strong Catholic upbringing
* My Catholic education from K-college My strong community of friends/family in the Catholic faith Fr. Frank's homilies give very practical ways to live out the gospel in my daily life. He is not afraid to talk about current events, which is very helpful.
* Wise Spiritual Teachers. Scholarly books on Spirituality. MEDITATION!!!! Wanting to get closer to God is a good start!
* Having Mentors who understand the power of prayer and the power and mystery of the sacred rituals of the Catholic Faith.
* My upbringing. Personal relationships with people. Study and reflection
* Our pleasure to serve needy rather than other way around 2
* Bible study, adoration, prayer, doing something for other people with other people.
* Being with a community and doing community service.
* I think finding St. Teresa's has helped me grow closer to God. It is a place that I feel welcome, and feeling welcome was a big factor in me feeling like I can grow closer to God. I also enjoy great music, and I think Jason and the band/choir does an excellent job playing worship music.
* Retreats, youth group activity during high school, and bible study.
* Retreat experiences, small groups, a sense of community, well thought out liturgy, devotion to the service of others.
* Homilies that challenge me to change my thinking about the world and my place in it
* Getting involved directly with a ministry.
* Food pantry, and serving the poor. A meaning Mass with "today relevant" homily/preaching I.e. How do I translate teachings of the church to my life and what I should be doing in 2016.
* Tragedy, struggle, marrying outside the Catholic faith, having children
* Strong church community and excellent priest. Both of which St. Teresa of Avilas has!
* I have made prayer and growing in relationship with Christ a priority by participating in faith sharing groups and praying the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.
* Relationship with my family, especially w conversations with my parents
* My family. Times of weakness/illness/pain

**Q: What could the parish offer to help you grow closer to God?**

**Themes are: Very pleased with St. Teresa’s; Appreciate the** homilies **and religious education; Would like more faith sharing opportunities; More outreach to various potentially underserved/struggling groups; More communications; Leverage more resources.**

**Sample comments:**

* Retreat opportunities Service trips Inspiring homilies - Fr. Frank does a fantastic job at this already
* Overall the parish is doing a great job. Perhaps small faith sharing groups, or perhaps a divorce support group or activities for singles in mid life
* St Teresa's offers plenty. I need to take better advantage.
* More small faith sharing groups speakers and events on a variety of topics Regular choir at the Masses
* My old parish had a younger group do "Catholic views and brews" Monthly we would meet and discuss a topic of interest over beer. I would also value one time opportunities to learn more or volunteer.
* Healing services where we put into practice what Christ taught us. We can call forth the healing energy of the Holy Spirit, we should do that for each other in groups.,
* More of a consensus approach to parish decisions. More open collaboration
* More awareness of the various groups and individuals who have left the parish and concern about why.
* To understand the Year of Mercy and what Social Justice means in ways to treasure the poor
* Time to talk with other community members.
* Bible study and retreats.
* Additional opportunities for millennials (or younger professionals) get togethers to brainstorm how to we can spread the word and increase membership to the church/reconnect inactive Catholics. Create LGBT community group to show St. Teresa's commitment to inclusiveness which attract more and diverse parishioners
* Practical day to day ways to be closer to God. Classes on prayer and/or meditation.
* I think st Teresa has so many offerings for fellowship, service, learning that it's hard to think of something else. St Teresa is amazing in so many ways. I think it's up to me to make time for more learning, prayer and spiritual growth.
* Providing opportunities to discuss and reflect on day to day events and how they impact my relationship with God could be helpful. Doing this with the guidance of a priest and other parishioners seems like a good approach.
* More homilies by or like Fr. Frank provides.
* Parish mission - yearly Lecture series on relevant topics, eg., prayer, sacraments, Bible study
* Less traditional rituals and more of the word of God. Father Frank does a great job but out of the 60 minutes I'd love more teachings.
* Be more welcoming to non-Catholics who attend because they are raising their children Catholic because their partner is Catholic. It is very oppressive right now and while I like the religious education I find that i have to talk to my child about what was taught to show them that there are other ways of thinking about things within the Christian faith.
* I need more time to decompress, the parish can't help with that I am afraid. It's on me to resume regular attendance, worship and participation; the last 12 months have been very difficult.
* Religious education program at St Teresa's is amazing!!
* More education and support of Catholic faith teachings.
* More service projects that kids can participate in.
* The parish is doing all it can and more for me. The rest is up to me!
* Retreats to the Camino or retreats away from Chicago would be great.
* Seems we focus alot on money. We had this huge fundraiser to re-do the church which was fine and it seemed like a waste of resources as Fr. Frank always preaches about the poor and wouldn't it be great it we took that money and made a real difference to these folks. The updated church is nice but it hasn't made my church experience better...
* Continued stewardship opportunities, brief (1-2 hours) opportunities to discuss faith with like-minded/life stage people. CFM
* Inspired speakers from outside the parish
* Open and affirming space to discuss struggles and issues
* Vibrant music ministry
* Opportunities to meet and connect with new people
* Prayer/support groups for different stages of life's journey
* Preaching opportunities for laypeople and women
* Meaningful worship, homilies, music.
* It would be wonderful to have a second priest, particularly one who could minister to the growing French speaking and international community.
* Would love a bible study group.
* Continue to attract diverse members who are open to being more faith-filled, even if they are not now.
* St. Teresa Avila is a shining example of what the new Catholic Church should look like and can be a model for other churches. Fr. Frank is a leader and Servant of God that inspires his parishioners to live out the word of God.
* I am not Catholic, but my husband is and we attend mass every Sunday. St. Teresa is a very welcoming place for a couple like us and makes me feel very comfortable with our decision to raise our children Catholic.
* I love this parish.

**Q: Additional Comments**

**Themes are: Appreciation for Fr. Frank, Parish Staff, and Community; Like opportunities to get involved; Want more information on how to engage; More support for families and those in crisis; Need to take advantage of all that is offered.**

**Sample Comments:**

* We love St. Teresa, the parishioners, the staff, and the services!!!
* I converted to become Catholic because of the faith I felt at St Teresa of Avila.
* I am not Catholic, but my husband is and we attend mass every Sunday. St. Teresa is a very welcoming place for a couple like us and makes me feel very comfortable with our decision to raise our children Catholic.
* I would like more transparency on financials.
* Fr. Frank seems to go on a ALOT of retreats and since I've been here two caminos. What I don't understand is how much time he gets off vs. what is normal. On Friday's when we do Loaves / Fishes he is rarely there but yet speaks of these people all the time as they are what his mission is. Couldn't he switch he day off?
* Wonder if FR. Frank could spend more time and energy on all the ministry and their teams by any participation vs going on the Camino 2x in last couple years as well as he always seems to be on retreats. His priorities seem out of line vs his homilies
* St Teresa's does a lot of things right - outreach to the poor, children & family activities. Falls very short in ministering to its parishioners through difficult times. ( unless a tragic death, etc.) People need to feel supported through life's challenges from our community more. I have not suffered in this realm yet - but have observed many who have and we are failing here.
* Less focus on raising money. Listen more to parishioners.
* I am interested in getting more involved in volunteering through the parish, but I've been a bit frustrated so far. I've tried to sign up for different roles a couple of times, but was told either that there was already the max number of volunteers, or that someone would be in touch with me—and then no one was. Seems like there should be a better way of organizing/managing so that there are specific action items and roles that we can tackle.
* Would it be horribly expensive to have Fr Frank's (not the substitutes) homilies podcast? I often wish I could hear them twice.
* The music at St Teresa is AMAZING, Fr Frank's homilies are inspiring and the newly renovated church is beautiful.. I LOVE this parish.
* Mass at St. Teresa is welcoming and vibrant, but sometimes a little too rushed.
* You do not know what you do not know. What are other leading practices that parishes are doing to support their mission? For example, I think the addition of the Night Ministry program is a great idea. I did not know that was out there until we introduced it. What other things are out there for us to do?
* There are a lot of opportunities - I just need to take advantage!