

As I See It

By Fr. Vin

Results of the Member Engagement Survey

Earlier this fall we once again asked Gallup to conduct a survey of our parishioners. Almost a thousand people responded, so we're confident that we have a good "snapshot" of what's happening in the parish. Thanks to all of you who took part, parish leaders and I now have a better sense of how our parish is changing, and how we're doing in being faithful to Christ.

A couple of notes on who we are, to start. First, we're older: 58% of you are age 55 or more (18% are 75 or older). Second, we've been here awhile: 74% have been here ten years or more. Third, we're mostly married, but with many parishioners widowed (8% single, 66% married, 5% divorced, 16% widowed). And getting by at Long Island prices is a struggle: (47% of households have income of less than \$40,000 a year; only 29% report \$75,000 or more).

The second area Gallup measured is what they call, *spiritual commitment*. This is personal, individual devotion: prayer and worship, forgiveness of wrongs, courage to defend one's values, and the like. Here our parish is strong: above average, if only slightly, for Catholic parishes on everything Gallup measures. And we're only a tad shy of what Gallup calls "excellence," the top 25% of parishes (we rate 4.19, excellence is 4.21, on a 1 to 5 scale). Part of this is understandable, since we're an older parish and spiritual commitment in people goes up as they get older.

The third (and key) area Gallup measures is what they call, *member engagement*. Here we have some work to do. Fewer than one in five parishioners (18%) are what Gallup calls *engaged* – loyal, with a strong emotional commitment to the parish and its work, inviting people to join in activities, contributing time and money. The biggest group (43%) is not engaged – and one key task is to invite them to deeper engagement. The third group, the *actively disengaged*, are on the margins or are disgruntled; 39% of our parish comes out that way, pretty typical for Catholic parishes (35%).

But a snapshot isn't a story, and the numbers are just an invitation to a conversation. Parish leaders will be talking to people in ministries and societies throughout the parish over the next year or so, asking how we can deepen member engagement and so both fulfill our parish's call from Christ to do His work in the world, and also bring members closer to the goal of Christian living, holiness.

In preparation for our 50th anniversary in 2012 we have some task groups set up. I'll be asking each one how it might help our parishioners to become more engaged; and the task group on ministry review and renewal will explicitly target how the activities (ministries and societies) of our parish deepen engagement or fail to, and what they might be able to do if we could offer them more resources.

But this isn't just for parish leaders. Our focus throughout the parish for the next several months will be on the central mission of Our Lady of Grace. Last Lent we asked you what you thought Christ was calling us to, and at a meeting on Pentecost last year parishioners sorted the responses and made recommendations to the Parish Council. The Council over the summer drafted a statement that it thought captured what you told us, and offered it for review and comment. Then it took the comments (about five pages of them) and revised the statement of mission. I'll be talking about it in two weeks at all the Masses, as we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord and the start of Jesus' public ministry and mission.

So you might want to get ready for the new year by thinking about your own mission from God: Why has God given you life, and faith, and talents, and opportunities? And what role does Our Lady of Grace play in your carrying out of your mission? Rather than a "New Year's Resolution," you might want to spend some time thinking about this very central set of questions: What were you put on God's earth to accomplish with the years God has been giving you? Only as that becomes clear can you make "resolutions" to do more of what fits with your personal mission, and to remove the obstacles to fulfilling it. Have a blessed new year and, until next week, peace.

Gallup ME²⁵TM

Our Lady of Grace

Member Engagement Survey Results

November 11, 2009

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Introduction to the Gallup ME²⁵

Gallup and Measurement For over 70 years, Gallup has been developing instruments that measure the "unmeasurable." Gallup has developed systems that accurately measure the "soft numbers" -- including customer and employee engagement and other former "intangibles" -- that are keys to business success.

Several years ago, Gallup confronted the challenge of measuring another "unmeasurable" -- spiritual engagement. Through its extensive research on the subject, Gallup has designed an instrument -- the ME²⁵ Member Engagement Survey -- that measures the spiritual health of parishes.

Traditionally, parishes have measured themselves primarily by their attendance, membership, and monetary giving. While these statistics are important, they are outcomes, not causes, of a parish's spiritual health -- they can be influenced by nonspiritual factors such as demographics and location. Gallup's ME²⁵TM goes to the heart of an individual's and a parish's engagement and spiritual commitment, giving parishes a clear picture of their spiritual health. Such a picture is crucial, for Gallup's research confirms that spiritual health drives all other factors -- including attendance and financial commitment -- in parish life.

What the ME²⁵ Measures The ME²⁵ consists of 25 items: 9 items that measure individual spiritual commitment, 12 that measure parishioner engagement, and 4 outcome items about life satisfaction, inviting, serving, and giving. The Spiritual Commitment items are individual and personal, while the Engagement items indicate how strongly one feels a sense of belonging within the parish. Members who are highly engaged are more likely to give more money to their parishes, and to volunteer more hours per week to help and serve others. They are also more likely to invite others to participate, and to be more satisfied with the conditions of their lives. The same is true of members who are more spiritually committed.

Member Engagement. Items E01 through E12 measure how engaged members are in the life of the parish. If a parish has high Spiritual Commitment scores, its scores on the 12 Engagement items will reveal whether it is a parish of excellence or one that is just average. Engagement is divided into four areas, each building upon the other, in a hierarchy of engagement. The first area is "What do I get?" and includes items E01 and E02. It is important that these two items receive high scores, because they form the base of the pyramid. The base must be strong if the rest of the pyramid is to stand. The second level is "What do I give?" and includes items E03 through E06. The third level is "Do I belong?" and includes items E07 through E10. The top of the pyramid is "How can we grow?" and includes items E11 and E12.

It is natural for new parishioners to look to fulfill their engagement needs at the bottom of the pyramid before they look to fulfill needs at the middle and the top. As parishioners move toward greater engagement, they will look to fulfill needs toward the top of the pyramid. However, there is interplay between the items at various levels, and individuals identify and prioritize needs on different areas of the pyramid as their engagement level changes. From the parish perspective, the Engagement items are the most actionable items on the survey, and steps taken to improve scores on these items will have a positive impact on spiritual commitment as well.

Spiritual Commitment. The real "bottom line" of a parish is producing spiritually committed individuals. Items C01 through C09 measure a person's spiritual commitment, in terms of both attitudes and behaviors. Members of a parish with high scores on spiritual commitment and low scores on member engagement have limited ways to express and live out their spirituality in the midst of their parish. If the parish increases the level of engagement among these individuals, it will unleash a powerhouse of potential for fulfilling its mission. Likewise, a parish of highly engaged yet moderately committed members would do well to focus on the basics of expectations and meeting spiritual needs in order to increase the commitment level of its members, thereby dramatically increasing its potential.

Outcomes. Items O1 through O4 are the measurable outcomes of life satisfaction, inviting, serving, and giving. Strong engagement and commitment are more likely to lead to high scores on these four items; weaker engagement and commitment are more likely to lead to low scores.

Demographics. Following the ME²⁵, respondents were asked a variety of demographic questions. A summary of the responses is included at the end of the report.

Conclusion Strong parishes produce spiritually mature individuals whose lives have a positive influence on our society and world. However, you can manage only what you can measure. The ME²⁵ provides your parish with a system to measure its progress, so that you can manage your parish with greater care and clarity -- in order to create positive change in people's lives. At Gallup, it is our pleasure to be your partner in this endeavor.

The following pages provide a summary of member responses to the Gallup ME²⁵ Member Engagement Survey. The survey statements were rated on a scale which required a response from among six response categories:

5	Strongly Agree
4	
3	
2	
1	Strongly Disagree
	Does Not Apply or Don't Know

The statement or dimension averages are based on a 5-point scale, with "1" being the lowest possible average and "5" being the highest average. "Does Not Apply" or "Don't Know" responses are not scored.

The Gallup ME²⁵ Survey includes Member Engagement, Spiritual Commitment, Outcome, and Demographic items. Note the following term definitions.

GrandMean_{Engagement} The average, on a 5-point scale, across Member Engagement items.

GrandMean_{Commitment} The average, on a 5-point scale, across Spiritual Commitment items.

Member Engagement The 12 items that Gallup has found to consistently link to outcomes.

Top Box The percentage of "5" (Strongly Agree) response

Engagement Scores The average Top Box response percentages for statements measuring each stage of the Engagement Pyramid.

Gallup 75th Percentile The score in Gallup's overall database above which 25% of all faith communities scored.

Following the Member Engagement Scorecard is a listing of response percentages and average (mean) scores for the Gallup ME²⁵ Survey items.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT SCORECARD

•Congregation: Our Lady of Grace

Current

Gallup
75th%

•Total n: 974

Mean (Average) Score

GrandMean_{Engagement}

3.11

3.74

GrandMean_{Commitment}

4.19

4.21

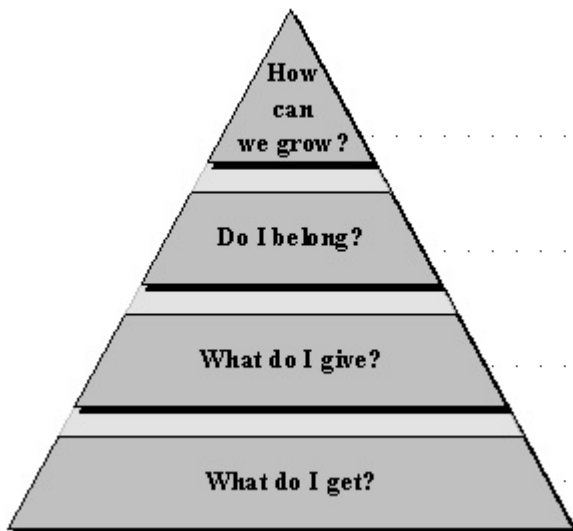
Top Box (%5)

Member Engagement



•Learn & grow	27	47
•Progress	9	18
•Best friend	26	34
•Members committed to spiritual growth	26	34
•Mission/Purpose	23	38
•Opinions count	15	28
•Encourages spiritual development	20	34
•Cares about me	25	47
•Recognition	15	32
•Opportunity to do best	22	33
•Spiritual needs met	28	39
•Know what's expected	31	39

Engagement Scores



How can we grow?	18	33
Do I belong?	23	34
What do I give?	21	37
What do I get?	29	39



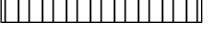


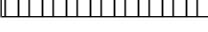


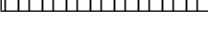
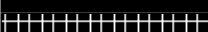

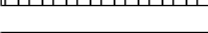




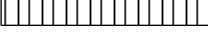


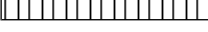


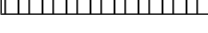


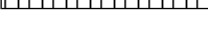

Gallup ME²⁵TM




Member Engagement Survey Results

Our Lady of Grace

Member Engagement Items	Sample Size	Strongly Disagree . . . Strongly Agree					Mean (Average) Score	Past
		%1	%2	%3	%4	%5		
E01. As a member of my parish, I know what is expected of me.	926	14	5	19	31	31	3.60	
	14787	2	6	23	37	32	3.90	
	37525	2	6	21	38	33	3.94	
E02. In my parish, my spiritual needs are met.	939	15	5	21	31	28	3.52	
	14825	3	6	21	38	32	3.91	
	38142	2	6	20	39	33	3.94	
E03. In my parish, I regularly have the opportunity to do what I do best.	873	17	8	25	28	22	3.31	
	13904	4	10	28	32	26	3.65	
	36397	4	10	28	33	26	3.68	
E04. In the last month, I have received recognition or praise from someone in my parish.	831	31	19	17	18	15	2.69	
	13254	22	19	20	17	20	2.94	
	35024	19	19	20	20	23	3.11	
E05. The spiritual leaders in my parish seem to care about me as a person.	887	19	12	22	22	25	3.21	
	14059	6	11	23	29	31	3.68	
	36756	5	10	20	30	36	3.82	
E06. There is someone in my parish who encourages my spiritual development.	871	24	15	22	19	20	2.95	
	13847	10	15	25	26	24	3.38	
	36486	8	14	23	27	28	3.52	
E07. As a member of my parish, my opinions seem to count.	874	25	20	20	20	15	2.80	
	13329	9	15	32	26	17	3.27	
	34675	8	14	31	29	19	3.38	
E08. The mission or purpose of my parish makes me feel my participation is important.	897	18	10	22	27	23	3.28	
	14147	5	10	27	32	26	3.63	
	36989	4	9	23	34	30	3.77	
E09. The other members of my parish are committed to spiritual growth.	866	15	7	20	32	26	3.48	
	13351	3	7	27	38	25	3.76	
	35564	2	5	23	41	29	3.89	
E10. Aside from family members, I have a best friend in my parish.	859	32	15	14	13	26	2.84	
	13883	22	17	17	17	27	3.08	
	36403	20	17	16	18	29	3.17	
E11. In the last six months, someone in my parish has talked to me about the progress of my spiritual growth.	836	46	21	15	9	9	2.14	
	13628	36	22	17	12	12	2.42	
	35938	30	22	19	15	14	2.61	
E12. In my parish, I have opportunities to learn and grow.	902	17	9	19	28	27	3.40	
	14344	4	8	22	34	32	3.82	
	37432	3	5	17	34	41	4.05	

Top Line ■ GM_E= 3.11, Our Lady of Grace
 Middle Line ▨ GM_E= 3.47, Catholic Overall
 Bottom Line || GM_E= 3.58, ME25 Overall



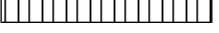


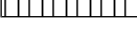
Spiritual Commitment Items	Sample Size	Strongly Disagree . . . Strongly Agree					Mean (Average) Score	Past
		%1	%2	%3	%4	%5		
C01. I spend time in worship or prayer every day.	950	3	10	18	28	41	 3.93	
	15210	4	13	23	23	37	 3.77	
	38951	4	13	24	26	33	 3.71	
C02. My faith is involved in every aspect of my life.	954	1	6	20	33	40	 4.05	
	15161	2	7	25	32	35	 3.91	
	38859	2	7	24	34	34	 3.90	
C03. Because of my faith, I have forgiven people who have hurt me. deeply	940	2	5	15	36	42	 4.10	
	14867	2	5	20	35	37	 4.01	
	38232	2	5	17	36	41	 4.09	
C04. Because of my faith, I have meaning and purpose in my life.	949	1	2	12	33	52	 4.33	
	15006	1	3	12	31	53	 4.31	
	38609	1	2	11	30	56	 4.36	
C05. My faith has called me to develop my given strengths.	940	1	5	20	38	36	 4.03	
	14909	1	5	21	36	37	 4.03	
	38367	1	4	20	37	37	 4.03	
C06. I will take unpopular stands to defend my faith.	938	0	4	17	38	41	 4.15	
	14868	1	4	19	36	39	 4.08	
	38293	1	4	19	38	38	 4.07	
C07. My faith gives me an inner peace.	945	0	2	8	33	57	 4.45	
	15025	1	3	11	31	54	 4.33	
	38608	1	2	10	31	56	 4.37	
C08. I speak words of kindness to those in need of encouragement.	957	1	1	5	33	60	 4.50	
	15032	1	2	9	34	55	 4.40	
	38670	1	1	9	36	53	 4.38	
C09. I am a person who is spiritually committed.	948	0	4	16	36	44	 4.20	
	14947	1	4	20	37	38	 4.06	
	38489	1	4	18	37	40	 4.11	

Top Line  GM_C= 4.19, Our Lady of Grace
 Middle Line  GM_C= 4.10, Catholic Overall
 Bottom Line  GM_C= 4.12, ME25 Overall

Gallup ME²⁵TM

Member Engagement Survey Results

Our Lady of Grace

Outcomes	Sample Size	Strongly Disagree . . . Strongly Agree					Mean (Average) Score													
		%1	%2	%3	%4	%5	Past													
O1. Overall, I am extremely satisfied with the way things are going in my personal life.	963	3	6	19	39	33	 3.94													
	15190	2	5	19	39	34	 3.98													
	38866	2	6	21	42	29	 3.89													
O2. In the last month, I have invited someone to participate in my parish.	807	46	18	13	11	12	 2.26													
	13472	44	20	13	10	13	 2.28													
	35903	36	20	14	12	19	 2.58													
O3. How many volunteer hours a week do you give to help and serve others in your community?	913	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>None or less than 1 hour</th> <th>1 to less than 2 hours</th> <th>2 to less than 3 hours</th> <th>3 to less than 4 hours</th> <th>4 to less than 5 hours</th> <th>5 hours or more</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>45</td> <td>13</td> <td>9</td> <td>7</td> <td>3</td> <td>23</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						None or less than 1 hour	1 to less than 2 hours	2 to less than 3 hours	3 to less than 4 hours	4 to less than 5 hours	5 hours or more	45	13	9	7	3	23	
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None or less than 1 hour	1 to less than 2 hours	2 to less than 3 hours	3 to less than 4 hours	4 to less than 5 hours	5 hours or more															
44	24	13	7	4	10															
O4. How much do you give per year to this parish?	911	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Less than \$500</th> <th>\$500 to less than \$1000</th> <th>\$1000 to less than \$2000</th> <th>\$2000 to less than \$3000</th> <th>\$3000 to less than \$5000</th> <th>\$5000 or more</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>45</td> <td>27</td> <td>19</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Less than \$500	\$500 to less than \$1000	\$1000 to less than \$2000	\$2000 to less than \$3000	\$3000 to less than \$5000	\$5000 or more	45	27	19	5	3	1	
	Less than \$500	\$500 to less than \$1000	\$1000 to less than \$2000	\$2000 to less than \$3000	\$3000 to less than \$5000	\$5000 or more														
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14780	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Less than \$500</th> <th>\$500 to less than \$1000</th> <th>\$1000 to less than \$2000</th> <th>\$2000 to less than \$3000</th> <th>\$3000 to less than \$5000</th> <th>\$5000 or more</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>28</td> <td>25</td> <td>22</td> <td>11</td> <td>8</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Less than \$500	\$500 to less than \$1000	\$1000 to less than \$2000	\$2000 to less than \$3000	\$3000 to less than \$5000	\$5000 or more	28	25	22	11	8	5		
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Less than \$500	\$500 to less than \$1000	\$1000 to less than \$2000	\$2000 to less than \$3000	\$3000 to less than \$5000	\$5000 or more															
25	20	19	12	11	14															

Top Line  Our Lady of Grace
 Middle Line  Catholic
 Bottom Line  ME25 Overall

Demographic Items	Sample Size	Response Categories					
		Yes	No				
D1. Did you attend Mass last week?	953	86	14				
	15224	85	15				
	38732	82	18				
D2. How long have you been a member of this parish?		<i>Less than 1 year</i>	<i>1 to less than 3 years</i>	<i>3 to less than 5 years</i>	<i>5 to less than 10 years</i>	<i>10 years or more</i>	
	938	5	4	6	11	74	
	14694	8	9	8	16	60	
	36757	13	14	12	18	44	
D3. What is your age?		<i>18-24</i>	<i>25-34</i>	<i>35-44</i>	<i>45-54</i>	<i>55-64</i>	<i>65-74</i>
	886	2	3	16	21	18	22
	14671	6	8	22	24	18	22
	37752	8	12	23	25	17	16
		<i>75+</i>					
		18					
		0					
D4. What is your gender?		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>				
	887	33	67				
	15182	40	60				
D5. What is your marital status?		<i>Single</i>	<i>Single, but living with someone as a couple</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Separated</i>	<i>Divorced</i>	<i>Widowed</i>
	882	8	2	66	3	5	16
	15195	11	1	75	1	5	7
	38752	13	1	75	1	5	5
D6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?		<i>Less than high school graduate</i>	<i>High school graduate</i>	<i>Some college</i>	<i>Trade, technical or vocational training</i>	<i>College graduate</i>	<i>Post-graduate work or degree</i>
	877	5	34	24	6	19	12
	15151	4	19	20	6	29	22
	38680	3	15	21	7	32	22
D7. What is your total annual household income, before taxes?		<i>Under \$10,000</i>	<i>\$10,000 to less than \$20,000</i>	<i>\$20,000 to less than \$30,000</i>	<i>\$30,000 to less than \$40,000</i>	<i>\$40,000 to less than \$60,000</i>	<i>\$60,000 to less than \$75,000</i>
	881	6	19	12	10	14	10
	14080	5	6	7	8	15	12
	36529	5	5	7	9	16	12
		<i>\$75,000 to less than \$100,000</i>	<i>\$100,000 or more</i>				
		13	16				
		18	28				
	17	28					

Top Line ■ Our Lady of Grace
 Middle Line ■ Catholic
 Bottom Line || ME25 Overall

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT INDEX



- Engaged** These members are loyal and have a strong psychological connection to their parish. They are more spiritually committed, more likely to invite friends, family members, and coworkers to parish events, and give more both financially and in commitment of time.
- Not Engaged** These members may attend regularly, but they are not psychologically connected to their parish. Their connection to the parish is more social than spiritual. They give moderately but not sacrificially, and they may do a minimal amount of volunteering in the community. They are less likely to invite others and more likely to leave.
- Actively Disengaged** These members usually show up only once or twice a year, if at all. They are on the membership rolls, and can tell you what parish they belong to -- but may not be able to name the pastor. However, they may also be regular in their attendance. If that's the case, they are physically present but psychologically absent. They are unhappy with their parish and insist on sharing that unhappiness with just about everyone.