

HOW ARE WE TRAVELLING?

Report on the Survey Questionnaire Responses of People Attending Worship with the St Mary's in Exile Community

When the Survey was circulated to St Mary's in Exile members who attended TLC, it had been over 18 months since the Community moved from St Mary's Church to the current premises.

The Survey was undertaken as an initiative by a number of Community members with the purpose of enabling the Community to voice their opinions thereby providing a snapshot of how the Community is travelling on its unique journey.

The results of the Survey have been carefully compiled by a number of people, who then have presented the Report. In the spirit of Community building and to assist in future planning, a Community Gathering is needed to explain and discuss the results in more depth.

The Task group expresses its sincere appreciation to those who gave inspiration, encouragement and practical support in this project.

Christine Rose (Convenor)

Sarah Harris

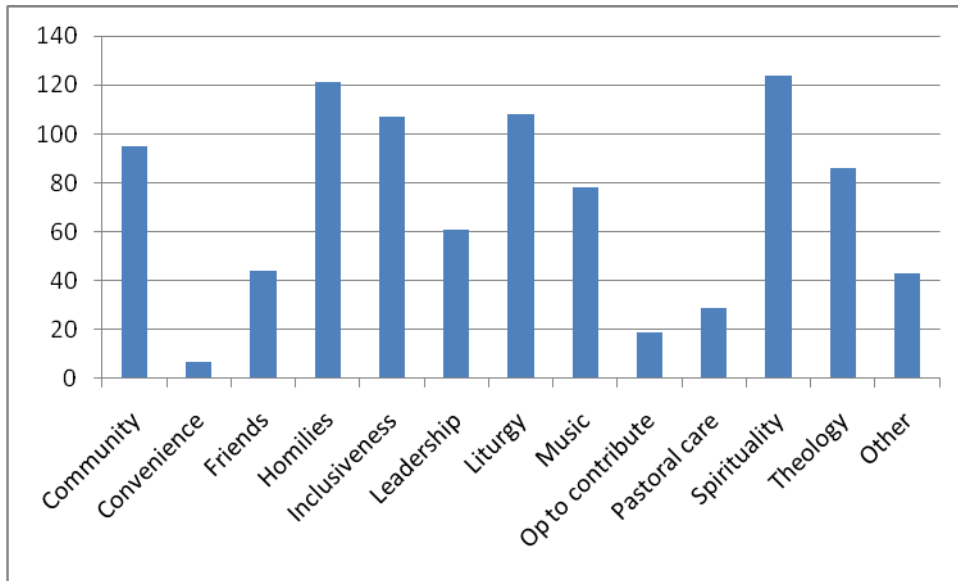
Wayne Sanderson

June 2011

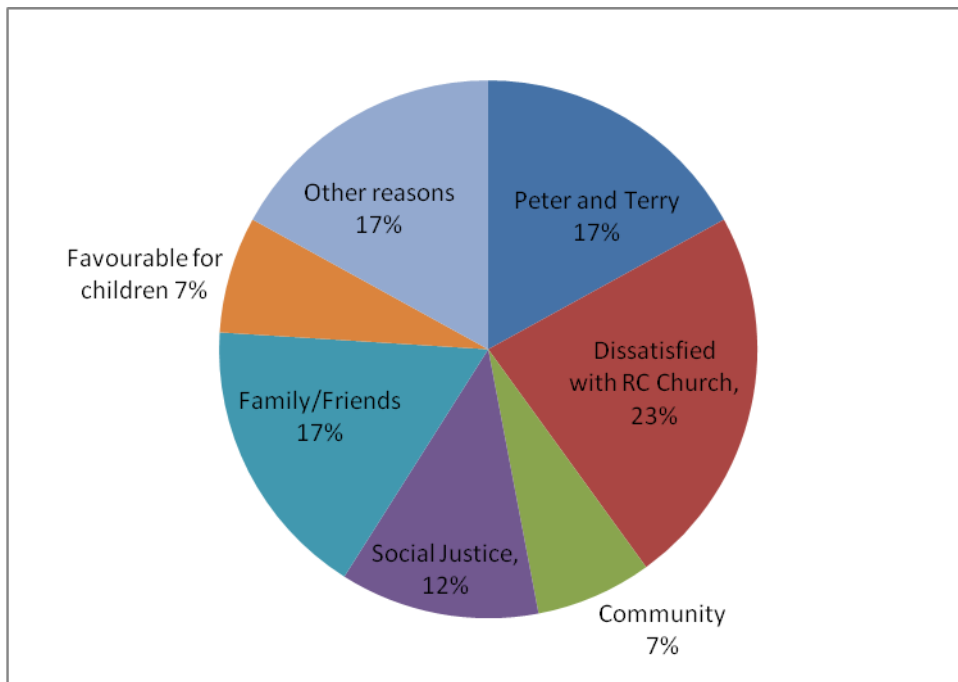
St Mary's in Exile Community Survey

Question 1

What originally drew you to St Mary's/St Mary's in Exile



Results of 'tick and flick' options



Summary of written responses to 'Other' option

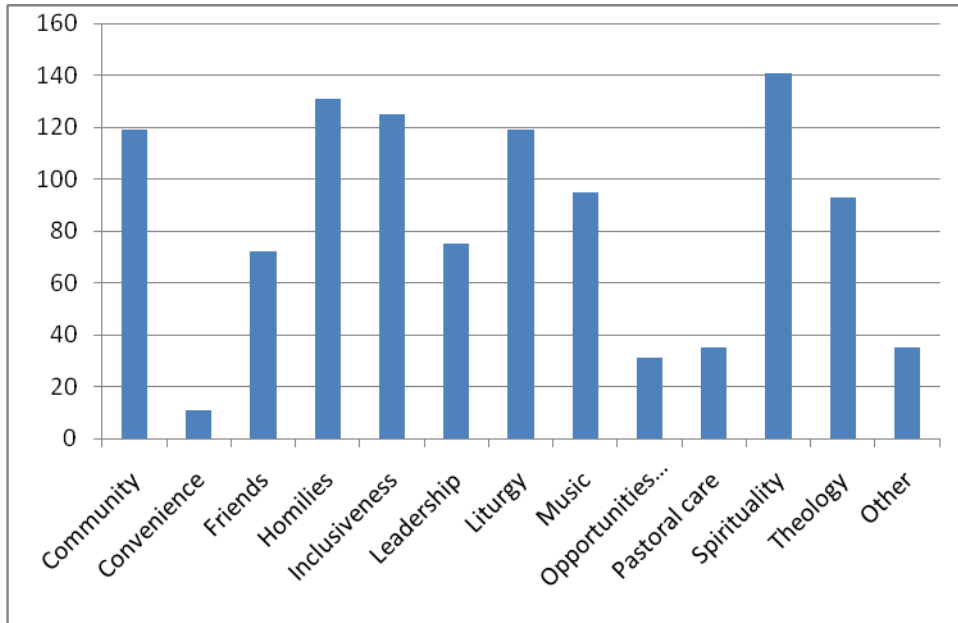
Breakdown of written responses to 'Other' option

| Reason | Number | Percent |
|--|----------|------------|
| Peter and Terry | 9 | 17% |
| Dissatisfaction with Mainstream Church | 13 | 23% |
| Community | 4 | 7% |
| Social Justice | 7 | 12% |
| Family/Friends | 9 | 17% |
| Favourable for children | 4 | 7% |
| Other reasons | <u>9</u> | <u>17%</u> |
| | 55 | 100 |

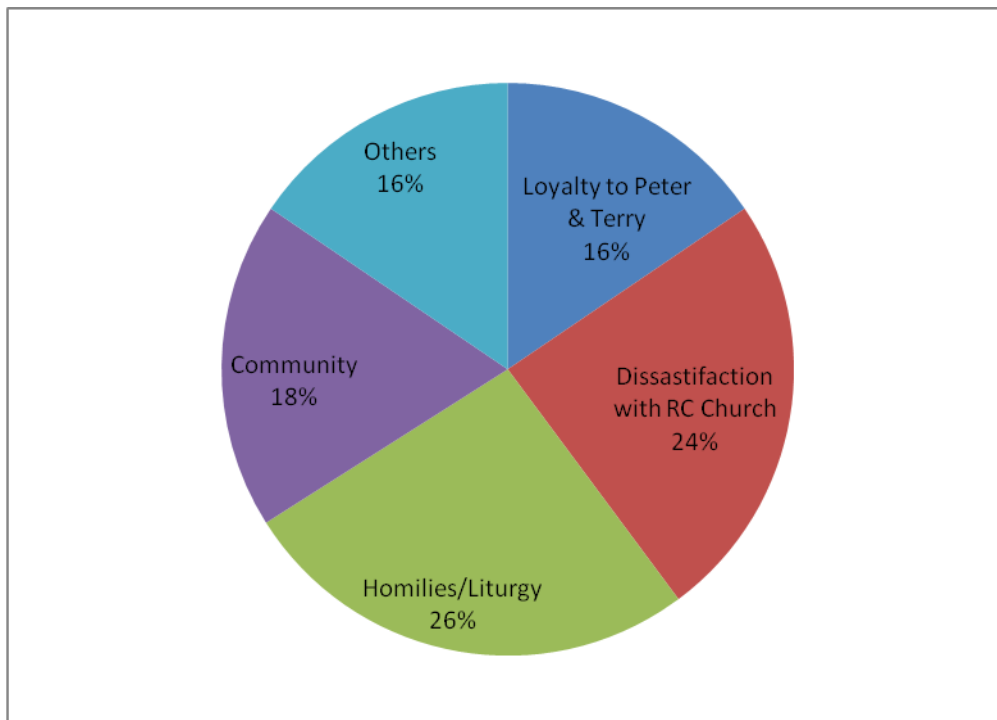
MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

- + Peter and Terry
- + Disillusionment with mainstream CR Church
- + Introduced by a friend or family member (including parents)
- + Spiritually nurturing for children
- + Other included support during a personal crisis, curiosity, women's issues

Question 2 What keeps you coming to St Mary's In Exile?



Summary of 'tick and flick' results



Summary of written responses to 'Other' option

Breakdown of written responses to 'Other' option

| Reason | Number | Percent |
|--|----------|------------|
| Loyalty to Peter & Terry | 6 | 15% |
| Dissatisfaction with Mainstream Church | 10 | 25% |
| Homilies, overall liturgy | 10 | 25% |
| Community and Social consciousness | 8 | 20% |
| Other | <u>6</u> | <u>15%</u> |
| | 40 | 100% |

MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

+Loyalty to Peter and Terry

+Dissatisfaction/Alienation from traditional religious ideology. Judgmental Catholic Church

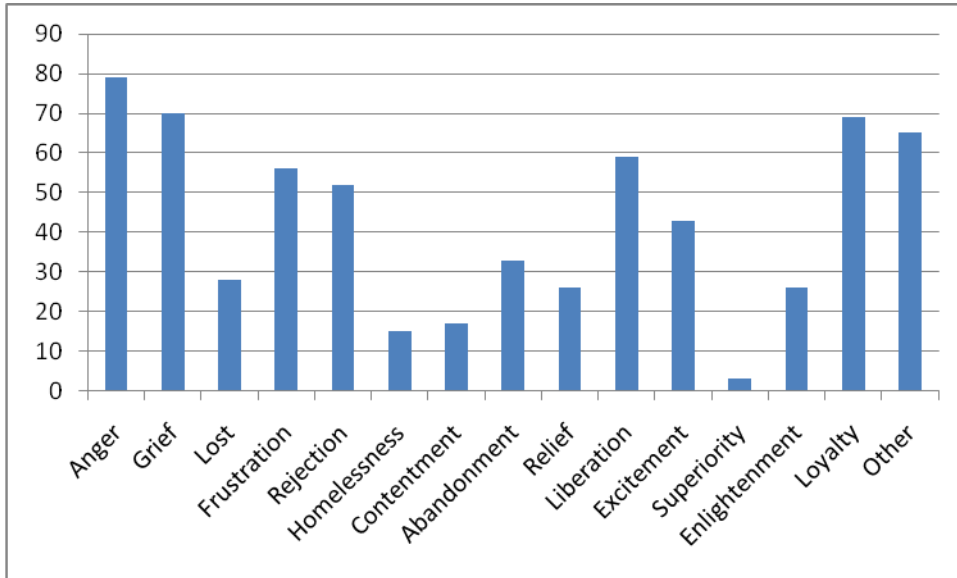
+Homilies and overall liturgies are meaningful most of the time

+Community and social conscious

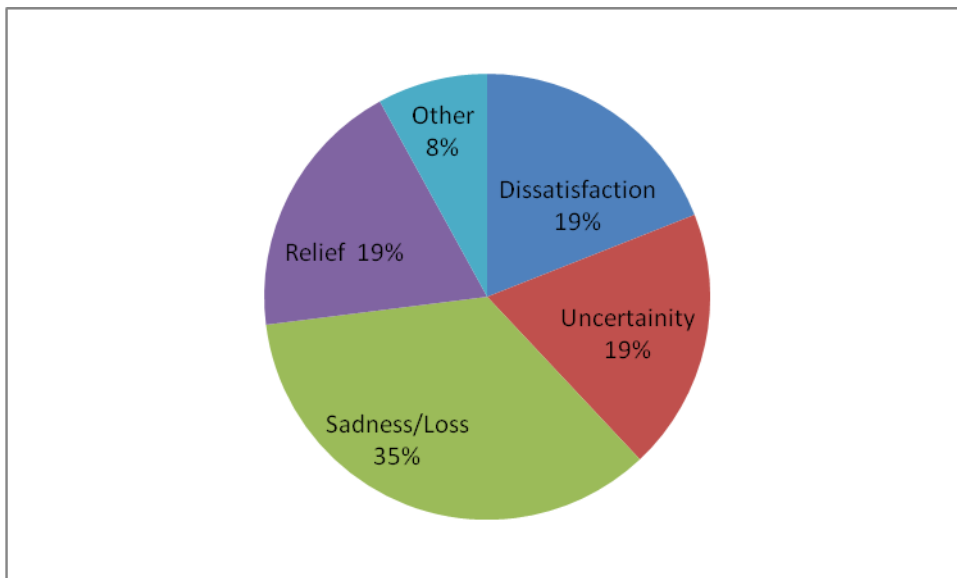
+Others – library and bookshop, innovative rituals (eg Gong), 'good vibe'

Question 3

What were your feelings at the time of leaving St Mary's Church?



Results of 'tick and flick' options



Summary of written responses to 'Other' option

Breakdown of written responses to 'Other' option

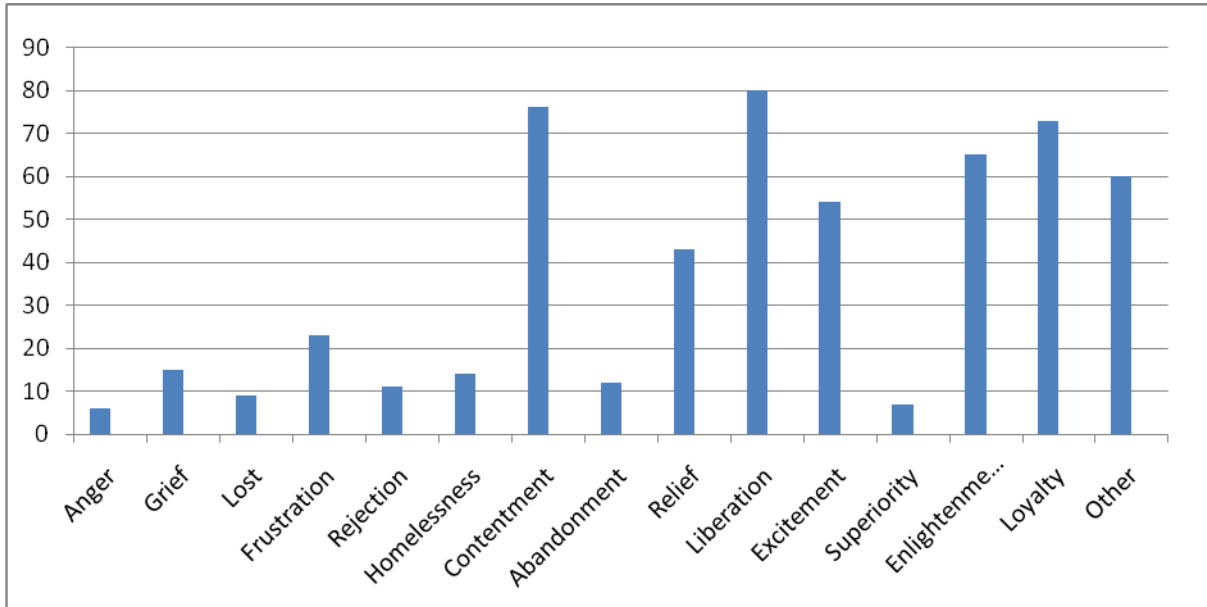
| Reason | Number | Percent |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Dissatisfaction with Catholic Church | 14 | 19% |
| Uncertainty | 14 | 19% |
| Sadness/Loss | 25 | 35% |
| Relief | 13 | 19% |
| Other | 6 | 8% |
| | 72 | 100 |

MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

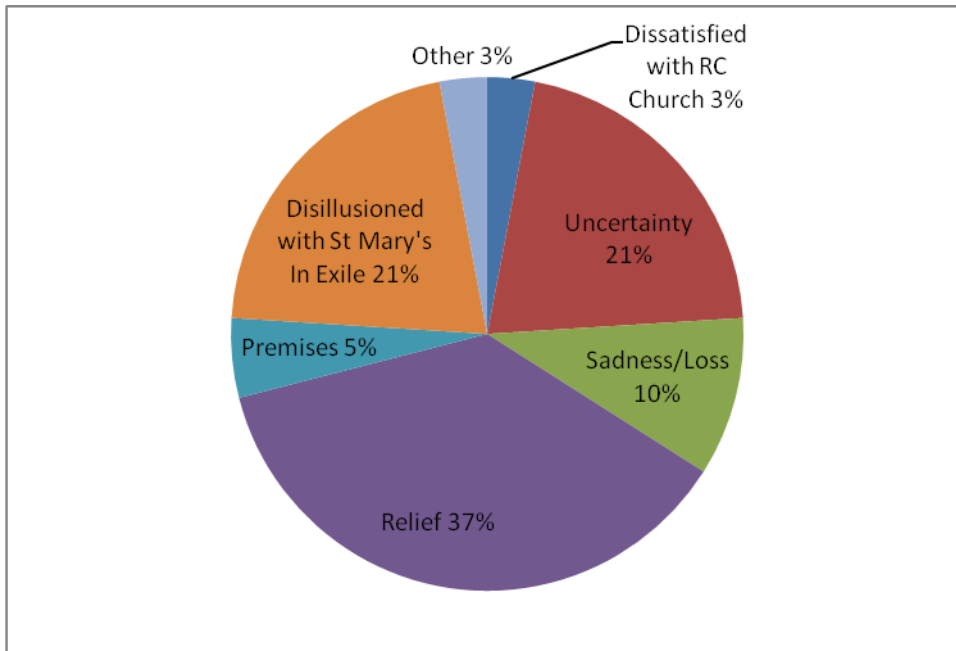
- + Grief and ambivalence after leaving Church of my youth
- + Fear and apprehension as to the future of St Mary's
- + Can our shock, confusion and grief be transformed into a better future for St Mary's in Exile?
- + Feeling of peace, liberation and wonder in departing from a failing institution but anger at the method in which we were forced out of the Catholic Church.
- + Other – appeal of non church location, grief at loss of St Mary's Church environment, church is people not buildings.

Question 4

What are your feelings now that SMX has existed for more than a year?



Results of 'tick and flick' options



Summary of written responses to 'Other' option

Breakdown of written responses to 'Other' option

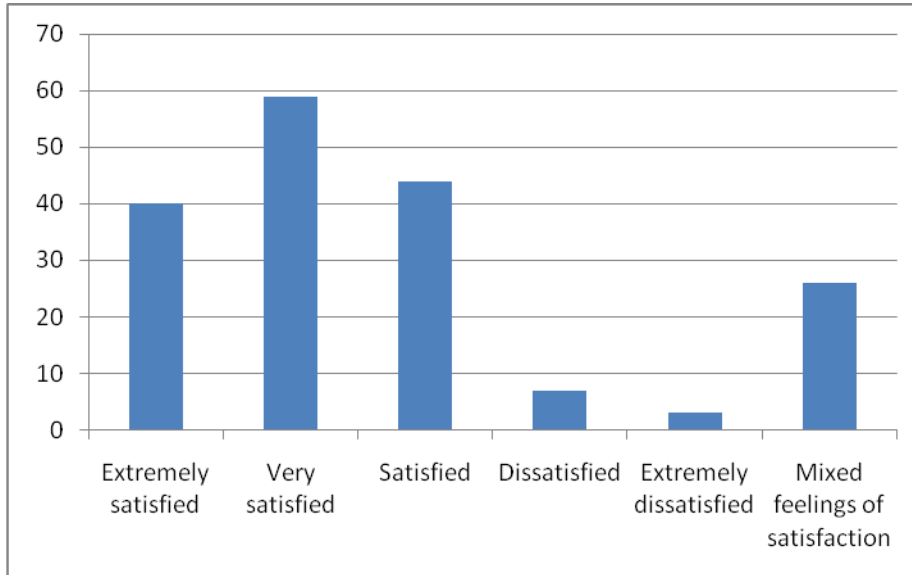
| Reason | Number | Percent |
|---|----------|-----------|
| Dissatisfied with RC Church | 2 | 3% |
| Premises | 3 | 5% |
| Uncertainty/Anxiety | 13 | 21% |
| Disillusionment at how SMX has turned out | 13 | 21% |
| Sadness/Loss | 6 | 10% |
| Relief/Liberation/Wonder | 23 | 37% |
| Other | <u>2</u> | <u>3%</u> |
| | 62 | 100% |

MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

- + So far so good
- + Disappointment that premises are not available 24/7 for the use of St Mary's in Exile community
- + Uncertainty and insecurity about St Mary's in Exile as a viable congregation.

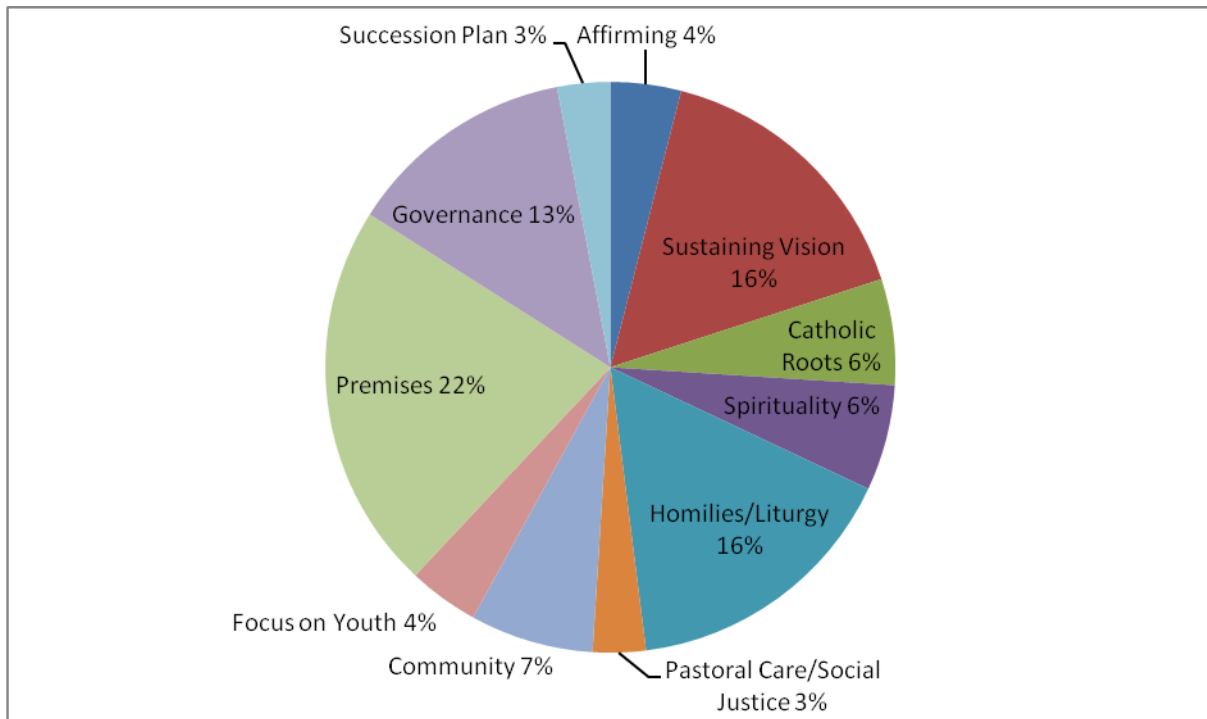
Question 5

How would you rate your level of satisfaction with St Mary's in Exile?



Question 6

What would need to change at St Mary's in Exile for your level of satisfaction to increase?



Summary of written responses

Breakdown of written responses

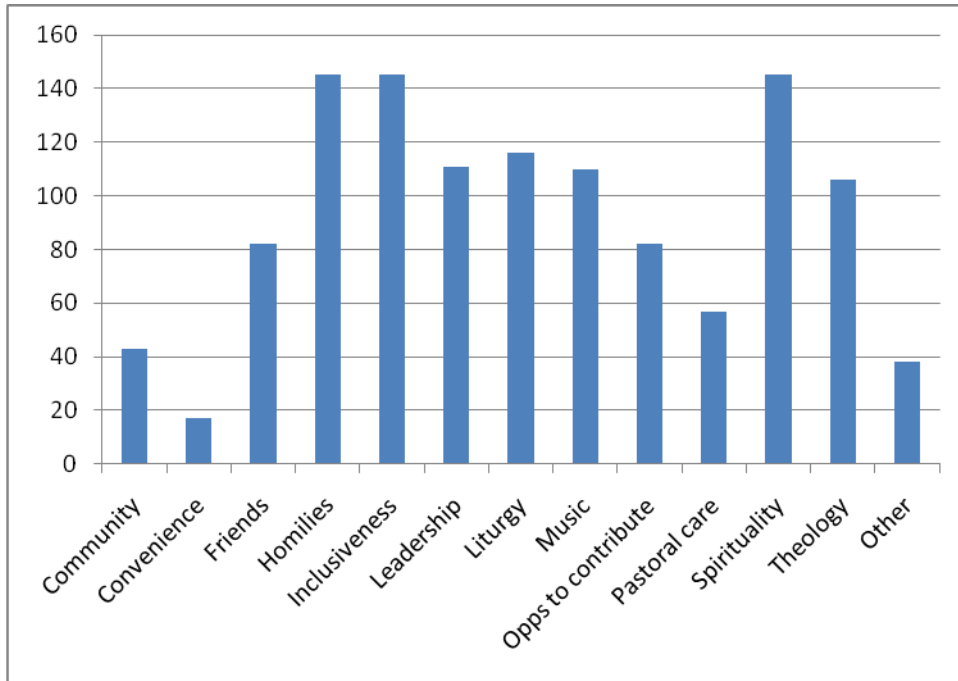
| Reason | Number | Percent |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Affirming | 6 | 4% |
| Sustaining Vision/Future Direction | 26 | 16% |
| Catholic Roots | 10 | 6% |
| Spirituality/Theology | 9 | 6% |
| Homilies & Liturgies | 26 | 16% |
| Pastoral Care/Social Justice | 5 | 3% |
| Community/Isolation | 12 | 7% |
| Focus on Youth | 7 | 4% |
| Premises | 37 | 22% |
| Communication/Leadership/ Governance/Finances | 22 | 13% |
| Succession Plan | 5 | 3% |
| | 165 | 100% |

MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

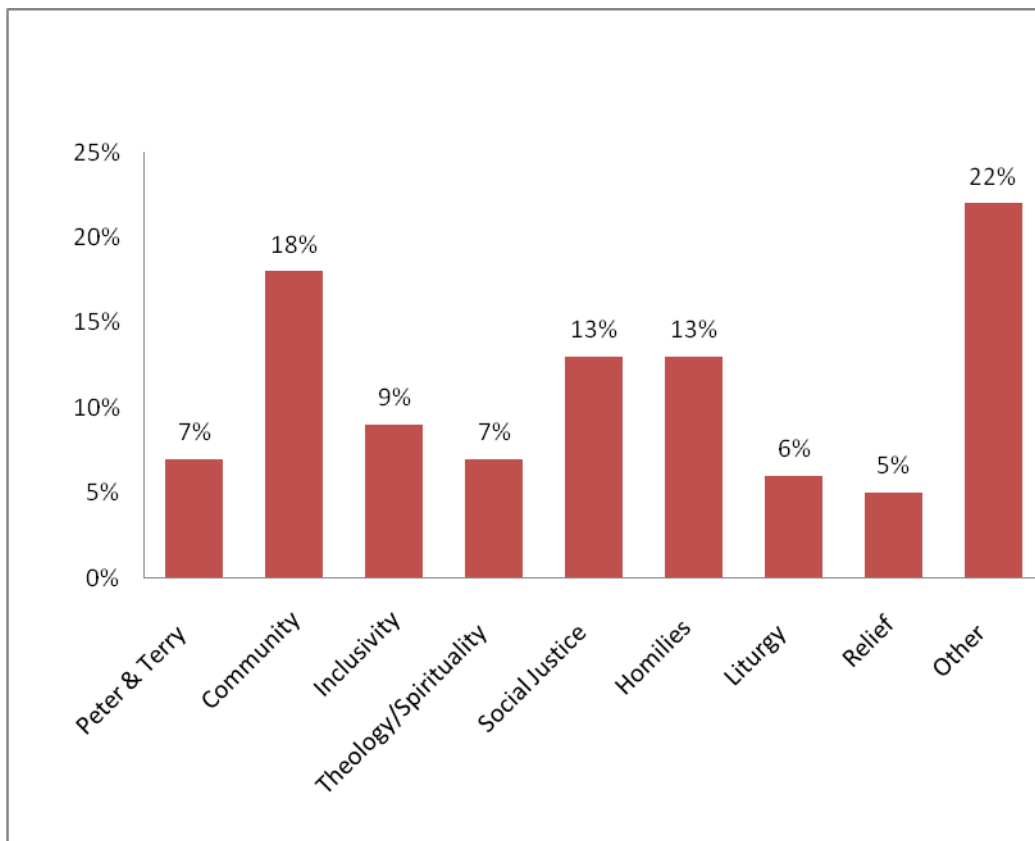
- + Six people generally satisfied with status quo.
- + Less reactive measures against Catholic Church. We need to be more concerned about who we are and where we are going e.g. what are the core theological beliefs that hold us together.
- + Significance of Catholic roots in ongoing journey.
- + Theological depth and coherence to liturgy and spiritual Growth are needed.
- + Homilies are a big challenge. More inquiry and consultation is needed in order to be authentic to our Christian purpose and relevant to the wide range of needs of the congregation.
- + Do travelogues, personal speeches and political statements outside Mass times.
- + Quality and wealth of repertoire of music could improve considering remuneration paid.
- + Must we applaud the homily?
- + Need to address the feelings of the isolated at St Mary's in Exile.
- + Youth and young adults under 40, particularly those who no longer come
- + Improvements needed in transparency and openness. Membership issue needs to be resolved promptly. Opening up of Leadership opportunities are overdue. Regular progress reports and financial statements are needed from the Board
- + Contingency planning and succession needs to be addressed, particularly in regards to Leadership and finances.

Question 7

What do you think are the strengths of St Mary's in Exile?



Results of 'tick and flick' options



Summary of written responses to 'Other' option

Breakdown of written responses to 'Other' option

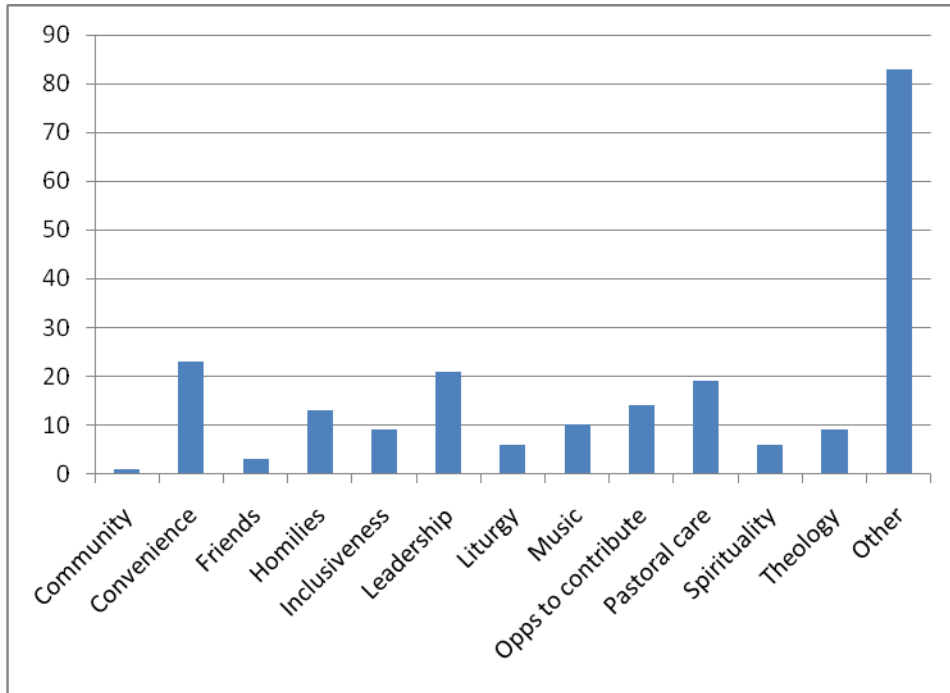
| Reason | Number | Percent |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Peter and Terry | 4 | 7% |
| Community | 10 | 18% |
| Inclusivity/Acceptance | 5 | 9% |
| Theology/Spirituality | 4 | 7% |
| Micah/Social Justice | 7 | 13% |
| Homilies | 7 | 13% |
| Liturgy | 3 | 5-5% |
| Relief/Liberation/Wonder | 3 | 5-5% |
| Other | <u>12</u> | <u>22%</u> |
| | 55 | 100% |

MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

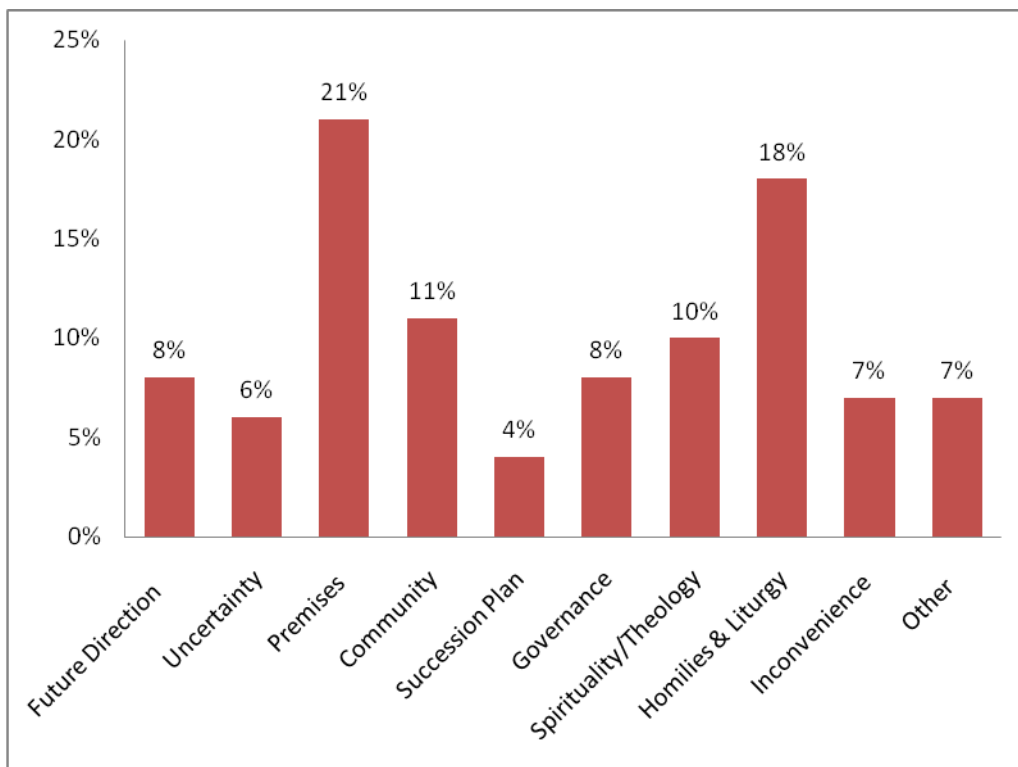
- + Leadership from Peter and Terry
- + Inclusive, accepting ethos of the Community
- + Importance of Social Justice focus
- + Encouragement to do critical reflection on my faith
- + Bread appreciation of homilies
- + Strengths in heading in new directions in our theology and spirituality

Question 8

What do think are the weaknesses of St Mary's in Exile?



Results of 'tick and flick' options



Summary of written responses to 'Other' option

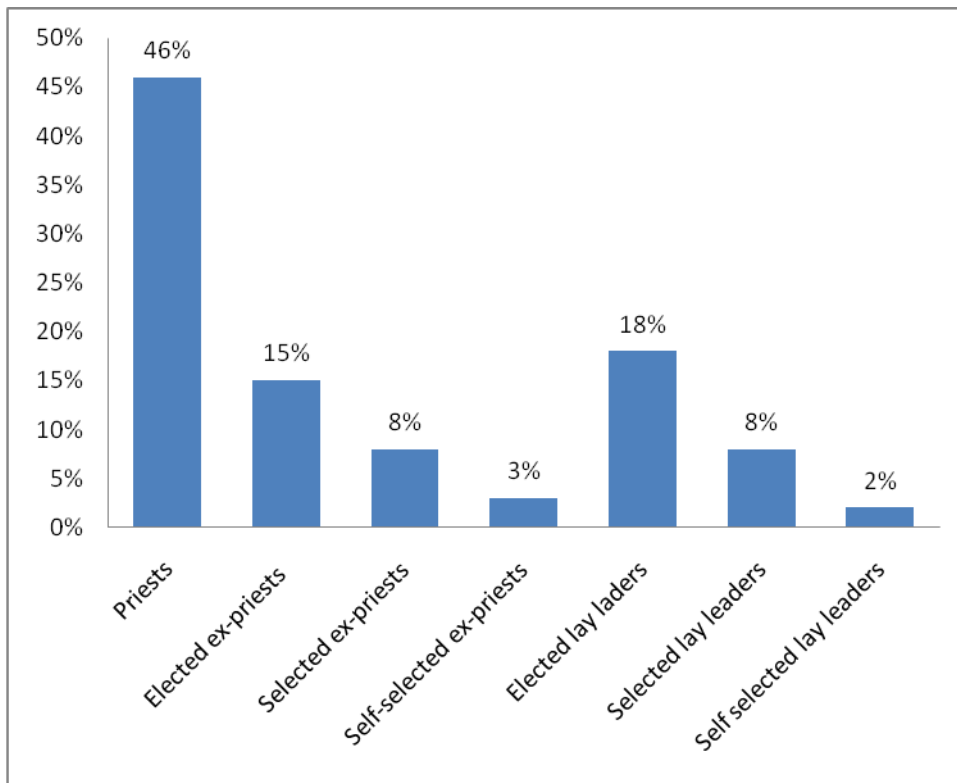
Breakdown of written responses to 'Other' option

| Reason | Number | Percent |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Future Direction | 9 | 8% |
| Uncertainty | 6 | 6% |
| TLC/Premises | 22 | 21% |
| Sustainability of Community | 12 | 11% |
| Succession Plan | 4 | 4% |
| Communication/Leadership/ | | |
| Governance/Finances | 8 | 7% |
| Spirituality/Theology | 11 | 10% |
| Homilies and Liturgy | 20 | 18% |
| Inconvenience | 7 | 7% |
| Other | <u>7</u> | <u>7%</u> |
| | 106 | 100% |

MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

- + Need to address our doubts about the future including direction, venue, and leadership
- + Concerns about cliques and the way criticisms are made and dealt with
- + Leadership issues
- + Need to avail ourselves of a richer range of theological resources to be reflected in homilies.

Question 9 Future Leadership of St Mary's in Exile



First Preference Responses

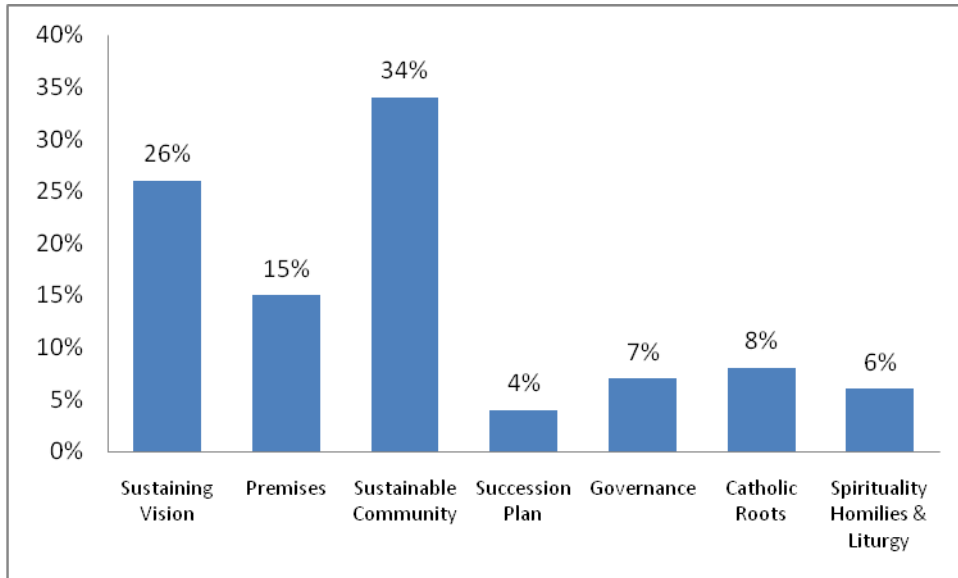
*A number of respondents indicated multiple first choices and a number of respondents ticked their choices. All ticks were given the value of '1'.

| First Preference | Number | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Priests appointed/elected | 85 | 46% |
| Elected ex-priests | 27 | 15% |
| Selected ex-priests | 15 | 8% |
| Self-selected ex-priests | 5 | 3% |
| Elected lay leaders | 34 | 18% |
| Selected lay leaders | 14 | 8% |
| Self selected lay leaders | 3 | 2% |
| Leaders not needed | 1 | - |
| None of the above | 1 | - |
| | <hr/> 185 | <hr/> 100% |

MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

1. There is a strong preference for the leadership of priests whether they be currently serving or ex-priests; whether they be single or married. (72%)
2. There is also a significant value placed on lay leadership. (28%)
3. While an integrated priests and lay leaders model of leadership was not presented as a choice, it is strongly supported in the “other comments” part of the questionnaire. (15%)
4. Here is a representation of the main points made in the “ other comments” section:
 - + Affirmation of women’s leadership
 - + Tap strengths of both genders
 - + Merit-based elections/appointments required
 - + High standards of training, experience and qualification needed for leaders
 - + Ecumenical Christian flavor important; non RC people to contribute on merit basis
 - + Open, transparent leadership styles needed
 - + No autocratic styles/ behavior needed
 - + Priestly role needed for Eucharist
 - +Team leadership needed; emphasis on accountability, especially in pastoral care upgrade

Question 10 What is your best hope for SMX?



Summary of written responses

Breakdown of written responses

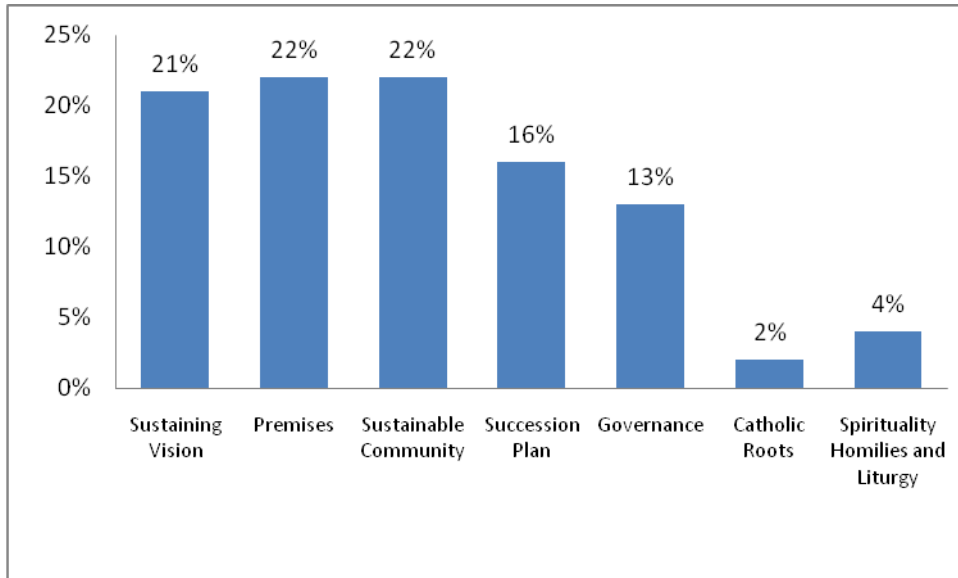
| Reason | Number | Percent |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Sustaining Vision | 59 | 26% |
| TLC/Premises | 35 | 15% |
| Sustainability of Community | 77 | 34% |
| Succession Plan | 9 | 4% |
| Governance | 16 | 7% |
| Catholic Roots | 19 | 8% |
| Spirituality/Homilies/Liturgy | <u>14</u> | <u>6%</u> |
| | 229 | 100% |

MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

- + SMX to build a culture of mature spirituality and diversity, upholding social justice
- + SMX to have Catholic-Christian Eucharistic integrity
- + Wise leadership shared by priestly and lay leaders
- + A Christocentric community, liberally applied
- + Vibrant, outward-looking, ecumenical and socially engaged charter
- + Walk with the marginalized
- + Attract thinking Catholics
- + Build a progressive, democratic spiritual community
- + Get more appropriate premises
- + Regain appeal to younger people
- + Better pastoral availability of clergy

Question 11

What do you consider to be the most important challenges facing SMX?



Summary of written responses

Breakdown of written responses

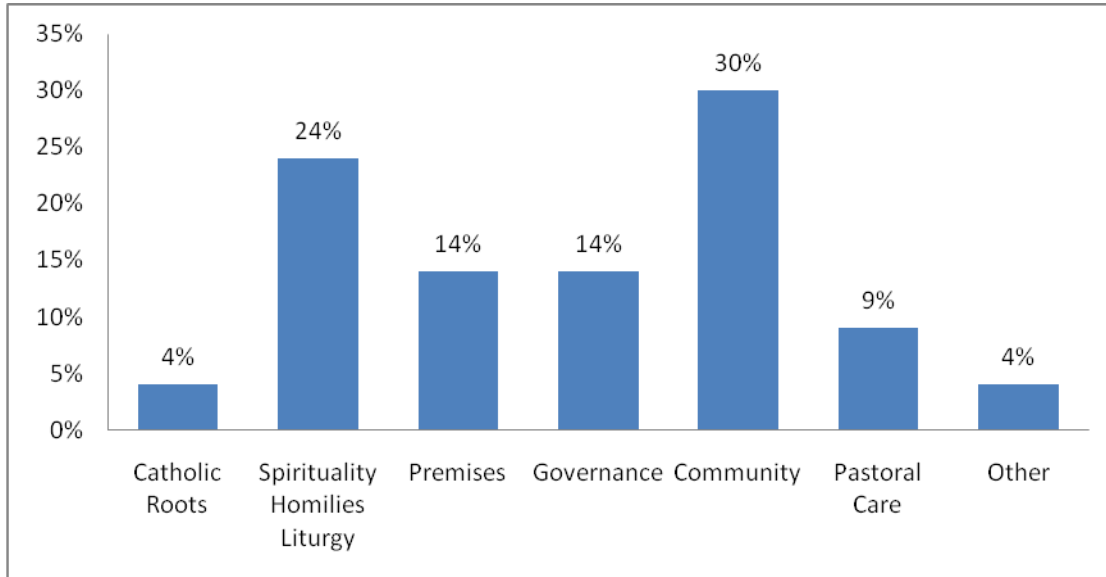
| Reason | Number | Percent |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Sustaining Vision | 48 | 21% |
| TLC/Premises | 50 | 22% |
| Sustainability of Community | 52 | 22% |
| Succession Plan | 36 | 16% |
| Governance | 31 | 13% |
| Catholic Roots | 5 | 2% |
| Spirituality/Homilies | 9 | 4% |
| | <u>23</u> | <u>100%</u> |

MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

- + Avoid complacency and self-satisfaction
- + Continue progressive, liberal leadership and theology; look up and out
- + Faith community rather than “weekend religion”
- + Avoid new age mumbo jumbo
- + Community of service in name and spirit of Jesus
- + Keep authentic and dynamic continuity of Christian roots
- + Relevant premises
- + Financial viability – big re-thinking about stewardship!
- + Relevance to youth
- + Sustainable leadership
- + Collegial leadership – clergy and lay together
- + Education for insightful discipleship
- + Positive Christian nurture for all

Question 12

What needs do you have of SMX that are currently not being met?



Summary of written responses

Breakdown of written responses

| Reason | Number | Percent |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Catholic Roots | 4 | 4% |
| Spirituality/Homilies/ Liturgy | 22 | 24% |
| Premises | 13 | 14% |
| Communication/Leadership/Governance | 13 | 14% |
| Community | 28 | 30% |
| Pastoral Care | 8 | 9% |
| Other | <u>4</u> | <u>4%</u> |
| | 92 | 100% |

MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

- + Loss of Catholic spirit and identity
- + More theological depth needed in homilies
- + Enrich liturgy with more disciplined homilies
- + Some of us singles find fellowship difficult
- + Quality music
- + Funeral arrangement options – communicate them
- + Election process for lay leaders
- + More open dialogue on important matters
- + Full and formal financial statements
- + Too many cliques
- + Address the exclusivity of the “inner sanctum”
- + Pastoral care – how does it happen?

Question 13

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

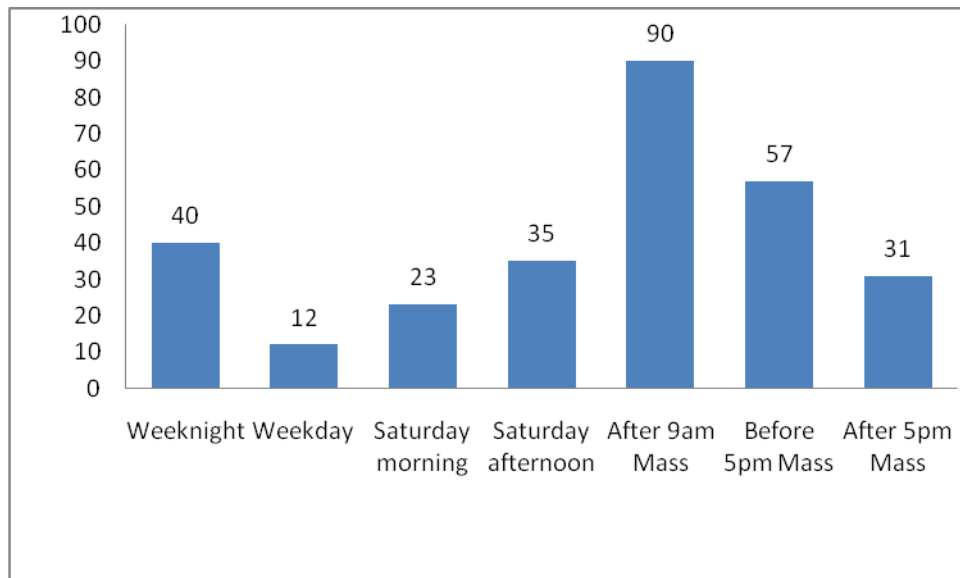
MAIN THEMES OF RESPONSES

- + Legal entity is OK – but elected pastoral council is essential.
- + Where are the younger adults?
- + Better acceptance of a spectrum of views is needed.
- + Why not a closer relationship with the Uniting Church, West End?
- + Let's tap the best potential of Vatican 2?
- + Education program needed
- + Accessible pastoral care needed. Who? How?
- + Better grounded use of scripture needed.
- + Visible attrition – too many have left.
- + Does our link with Micah become an alibi? Vicarious concern for the poor?
- + Not enough positive follow-up from community meetings – much more transparency and accountability needed.
- + Gratitude and appreciation for the leadership given by Peter and Terry

Would you be willing to attend a community gathering to discuss these matters more fully?

| Response | Number | Percent |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 81 | 89% |
| No | <u>10</u> | <u>11%</u> |
| | 91 | 100% |

Preferred time for Community Gathering

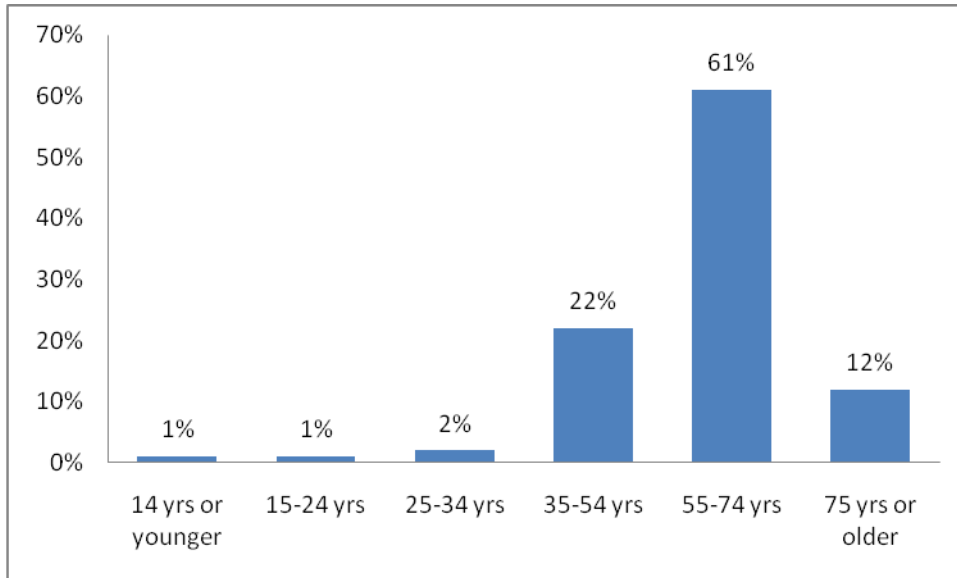


*A number of respondents indicated more than a one preference.

Gender of respondents

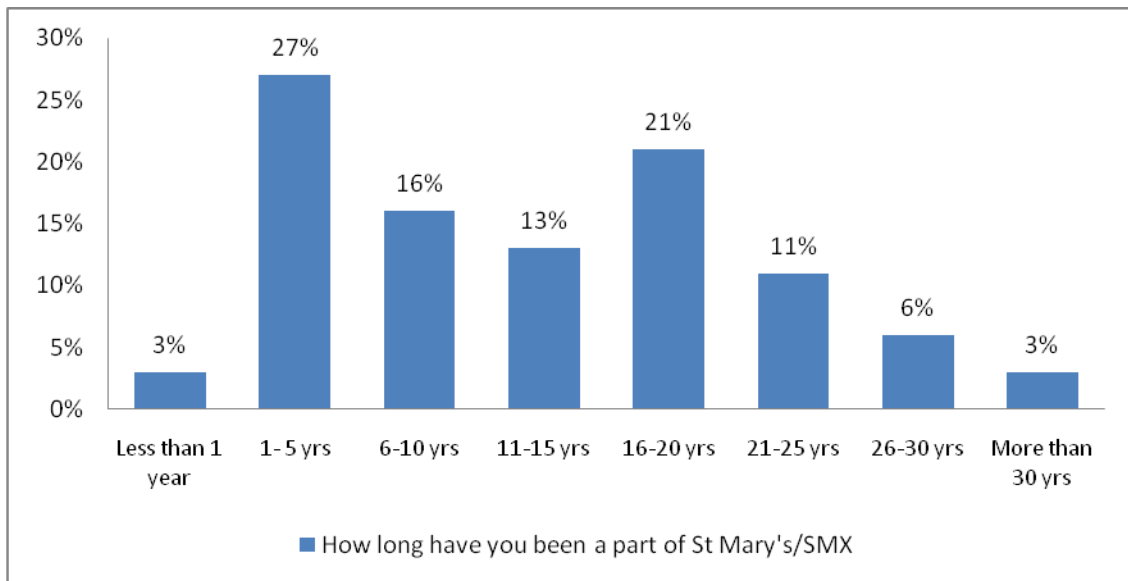
| Response | Number | Percent |
|----------|------------|------------|
| Male | 60 | 34% |
| Female | <u>117</u> | <u>66%</u> |
| | 177 | 100% |

Age demographic of St Mary's Community



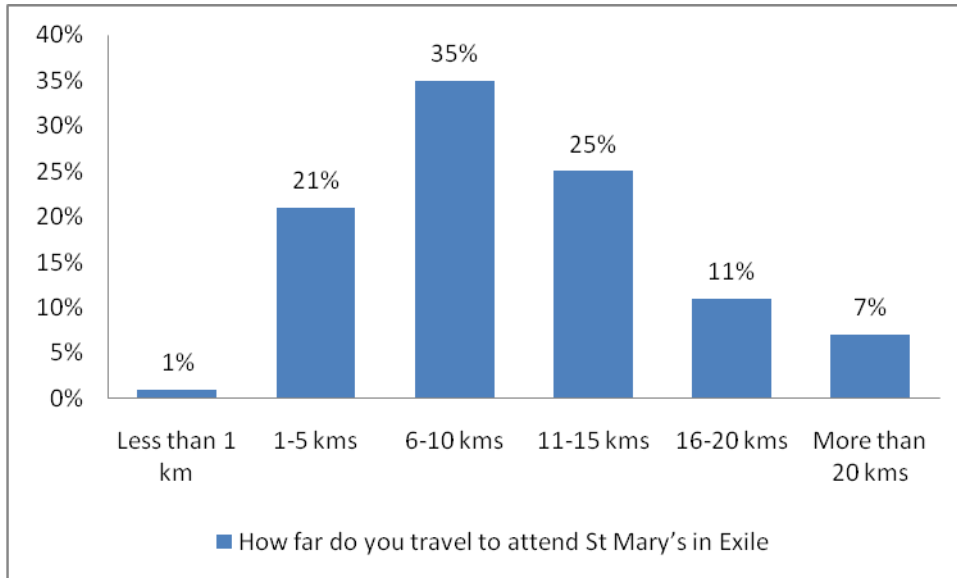
| Response (in years) | Number | Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| 14 or younger | 2 | 1% |
| 15 – 24 | 2 | 1% |
| 25 – 34 | 4 | 3% |
| 35 – 54 | 39 | 22% |
| 55 – 74 | 109 | 61% |
| 75 or older | <u>22</u> | <u>12%</u> |
| | 178 | 100% |

Years attended St Mary's/St Mary's in Exile



| Response | Number | Percent |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|
| Less than 1 year | 5 | 3% |
| 1 – 5 years | 48 | 27% |
| 6 – 10 years | 29 | 16% |
| 11 – 15 years | 24 | 13% |
| 16 – 20 years | 38 | 21% |
| 21 – 25 years | 20 | 11% |
| 26 – 30 years | 10 | 6% |
| More than 30 years | <u>5</u> | <u>3%</u> |
| | 179 | 100% |

Kilometres traveled to attend St Mary's in Exile



| Response | Number | Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Less than 1 kilometre | 1 | 1% |
| 1 – 5 kilometres | 37 | 21% |
| 6 – 10 kilometres | 61 | 35% |
| 11 – 15 kilometres | 44 | 25% |
| 16 -20 kilometres | 19 | 11% |
| More than 20 kilometres | <u>13</u> | <u>7%</u> |
| | 175 | 100% |