

# **Interpretation of the 2025 Thriving Parish Survey Report**

## **St. Blaise Parish in Austintown, Ohio**

This summary, prepared by Jim Merhaut, identifies the highlights of the survey results and is intended to assist the planning team members as they make decisions about the future direction of St. Blaise Parish.

### **What is most important to St. Blaise Parishioners?**

- 1. Religious Education for All**
- 2. Hospitality and Safe Environment**
- 3. Worship**
- 4. Leadership**

Parishioners evaluated thirteen proven characteristics of thriving parishes. While parishioners agreed that all thirteen characteristics are important, four of the characteristics scored at close to 4.5 or higher on a scale of 1-5 measuring their level of importance for thriving. The four characteristics that were identified as most important to St. Blaise parishioners are as follows in priority order:

1. Members of all ages have access to religious education that helps them follow the way of Jesus in their daily lives. (4.53)
2. The parish has a strong commitment to hospitality and safety for children and vulnerable adults. (4.52)
3. The parish creates a powerful experience of God in worship through meaningful rituals, relevant preaching, and inspiring music. (4.49)
4. There is a strong leadership team led by and effective Pastor who together equip and empower volunteer leaders and leadership teams in the parish. (4.48)

### **What does St. Blaise Parish do best?**

- 1. Digital Communication**
- 2. Service, Outreach, Partnerships**
- 3. Hospitality and Safe Environment**
- 4. Worship**

Parishioners also evaluated the 13 characteristics to determine how well the parish implements each characteristic. Four of the thirteen scored above 4.0 on a scale of 1-5.

1. The parish uses a wide variety of digital media to communicate its message. (4.13)
2. The parish engages dynamically with its neighbors through volunteer service, generous giving, and formal partnerships with outside organizations to address real needs. (4.06)
3. The parish has a strong commitment to hospitality and safety for children and vulnerable adults. (4.03)
4. The parish creates a powerful experience of God in worship through meaningful rituals, relevant preaching, and inspiring music. (4.01)

### **What does St. Blaise Parish do where there are opportunities for significant improvement?**

- 1. Applying Faith to Current Events**
- 2. Listening and Learning**
- 3. Innovating and Adapting to Change**
- 4. Communicating its Core Identity**

The following four characteristics received the lowest scores on a scale of 1-5 from parishioners in terms of how well the parish implements them.

1. Members are encouraged and empowered to apply their faith in God to the way they view and respond to local, national, and international events. (3.39)
2. The parish is committed to listening and learning in both individual interactions and community development. (3.54)
3. The parish displays a willingness to be innovative and adaptive in its response to changing times and circumstances. (3.57)
4. The parish communicates a strong sense of its identity in terms of its history, its current mission and values, and its vision. (3.58)

### **An Interpretation of the Results:**

Here is one way to interpret these results. Of the four characteristics of thriving parishes that were named as most important, only two of them were discerned as being characteristics we implement very well. The other two (Religious Education for All &

Leadership) ranked lower on the implementation scale. Improving or expanding religious education and our leadership system would help align our practices with our values.

It is notable that three of the things that were ranked lowest for implementation are leadership related (Listening & Learning, Innovating & Adapting to Change, and Communicating its Core Identity). The fourth among the lowest ranked characteristics for implementation (Applying Faith to Current Events) is a characteristic related to religious education.

It could be valuable, based on these survey results, for our planning team to spend its time considering strategies in the areas of religious education and leadership.