Parish Health Ministry
Diocese of the Midwest
Orthodox Church in America

Urban Parish Summit

July 16-17 2009

St Theodosius Cathedral
Cleveland OH
Archangel Michael Church
Broadview Heights OH

TO EXPLORE THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES TO PROCLAIM CHRIST IN URBAN SETTINGS

The Vocation of an Orthodox Urban Parish in the 21st Century

Parish Health Ministry

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Why

- Approximately 35% of Diocesan parishes are located in major urban areas as opposed to the suburbs or rural locations.
- The profile of the urban parish has dramatically shifted over past 100 years.
  - Orthodox immigrants no longer live adjacent to their urban parish.
  - Majority of parishioners have embraced a suburban lifestyle, -- long commutes to church. Or transfer to suburban parishes with lush lawns and newer facilities.
  - Many parish neighborhoods are in decline -- challenged by poverty and crime.
  - Backward not forward looking
  - In towns strapped by economic changes, some parishes consist of senior citizens who do not have the capabilities and perhaps the motivation to carry out ministries, or maintain a vibrant, healthy parish.
  - Large and aging parish buildings are costly to maintain, and drain the parish of resources that could be used for parish life and ministries.
  - Some neighborhoods however are enjoying rebirth.
- Bringing Orthodox Urban parishes together to share, connect and define approaches to common problems is a critical step in growing Orthodoxy in America.

Goals – Urban Parish Summit

1. Explore the opportunities that uniquely exist in urban settings for proclaiming Christ.
2. Identify and agree upon the top challenges facing Orthodox Urban parishes.
3. Inventory what we're doing today in our Urban parishes.
4. Understand what is working and not working in Orthodox urban parishes -- and define a clear set of good practices as a result.
5. Select a few key issues to develop potential approaches and solutions that can be used to tackle these challenges.
6. Identify key priorities for the Diocese of the Midwest for assisting urban parishes to live out their vocation.
7. Commit to one action
   - Each parish in attendance departs with at least one important believable action that they commit to taking in the next year.

Agenda

DAY ONE: Exploring the Role of the Urban Parish

- Introduction
- ***Check in Exercise*** What is Working and Not
- FOCUS On Urban Parish Ministries: Reaching "The Least of These." ***Fr. Justin Mathews***,
- Lunch; Group Photo
- Reaching Out to New Urban Professionals ***Sister Rita Mary Harwood,*** Cleveland Catholic Diocese
- Debunking Myths of the Needy Fr. ***Deacon Ed Brisbine***, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Warren, Ohio,
- Loving Thy Neighbor in The Urban Parish: Partnership With The Neighborhood ***Charles Robbins,*** St Gregory of Nyssa Columbus OH
- Day One Closing Workshop
- Application to Your Urban Parish:
- Intro Day Two Workshop
- 6:15 pm Fellowship Social Hour; Dinner

Day Two Building Good Practices for Urban Parishes

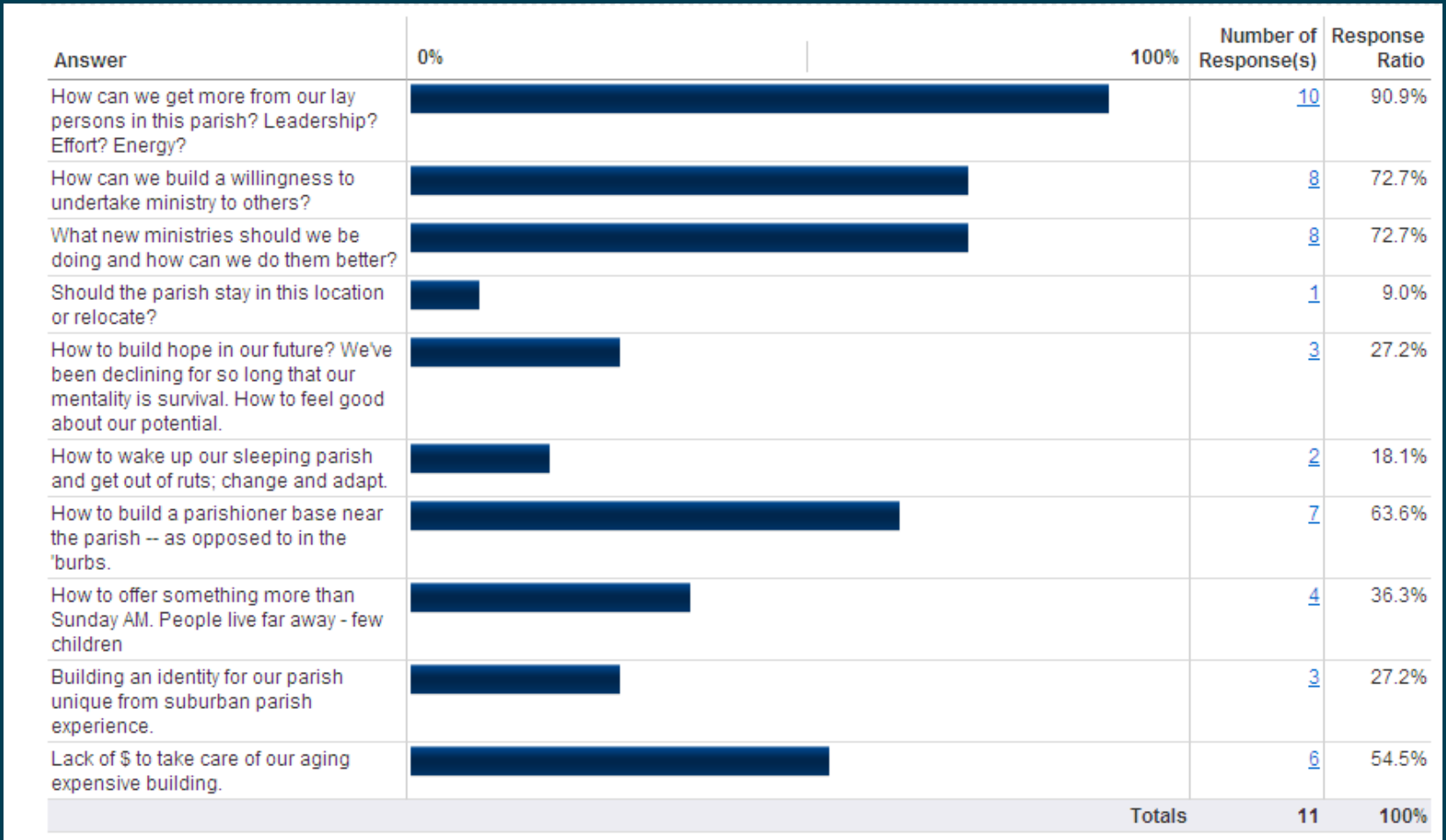
- Review Day One; Key Highlights Summary
- 8:45 am Fostering Change and Growth in the Established Parish
- *Fr. Gregory Jensen,* Priest in charge, Holy Assumption Orthodox Church, Canton OH
- Good Practices Workshop – Fix This Urban Parish
- Lunch
- 1:15 PM Workshop Building a Maturity Model for Urban Parishes
- 2:15 PM What Urban Parishes Need from Our Diocese and the OCA – *Workshop*
- Summation What have we accomplished? What next?

Some Issues Faced by Urban Parishes

- Should we stay or go?
- How to build a willingness to undertake ministry to others?
- What new urban ministries should we be doing and how can we do them better?
- What do we need to know about ministry xyz in order to do it better.
- How to build hope in our future? We've been declining for so long that our mentality is survival. How to feel good about our potential.
- How to get out of ruts. Waking up a sleeping parish. Learning to change and adapt
- How to build an identity and a new spirit in our parish
- How to build a vibrant parish life that offers something unique
- How to offer something more than Sunday AM -- when we don't have enough children, our people live too far away, many are elderly etc.
- How to attract new members to a church that is half full and those that are there are over 70 – and has long appeared to insular and isolated.
- How do we attract people from the suburbs? Should we attract people from the burbs –or should we focus locally? "Target population for evangelization"
- We don't have enough money to take care of our aging expensive building – much less start new ministries.
- How can we get more from our lay persons in this parish? Leadership? Effort? Energy?

Which Issues are Important to Your Parish?

From Preconference Survey



Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
How can we get more from our lay persons in this parish? Leadership? Effort? Energy?		10	90.9%
How can we build a willingness to undertake ministry to others?		8	72.7%
What new ministries should we be doing and how can we do them better?		8	72.7%
Should the parish stay in this location or relocate?		1	9.0%
How to build hope in our future? We've been declining for so long that our mentality is survival. How to feel good about our potential.		3	27.2%
How to wake up our sleeping parish and get out of ruts; change and adapt.		2	18.1%
How to build a parishioner base near the parish -- as opposed to in the 'burbs.		7	63.6%
How to offer something more than Sunday AM. People live far away - few children		4	36.3%
Building an identity for our parish unique from suburban parish experience.		3	27.2%
Lack of $ to take care of our aging expensive building.		6	54.5%
	Totals	11	100%

Session 1
Key Challenges/We Need Help With...

- Finances/stewardship
- Majority do not support the parish with first fruits, but rather with token giving
- Prioritizing how much $ to put where.
- In our desperate economy in Detroit, how do we raise the needed money that we need to initially offset our costs, and to plan our future?
- Overcoming the fear of spending our parishes savings – hoarding
- Need a priest (parish w/o assigned priest)
- Help with incorporation/ guidelines?
- Strategies for/ experiences of others dealing with university
- Parking
- Aging Facility ; maintaining older property
- Our facility –adequate access
- Aging Congregation
- Lacking Full Multi-Generational Representation
- Establishing a Mercy Group to more actively engage lay people in the ministry to the sick, shut-ins, and others in need of fellowship, contact, etc.
- Making sure that existing programs get the attention they need.
- Setting parameters for ourselves so that too few get too overextended
- Attracting people from the neighborhood
- Trend of new members to live farther away from the parish's location.
- With so many families moving farther away from the city, how do we bring them all the way back home to us?
- Location, many people have moved out of the area
- Fear of attending evening services.
- Changed ethnic neighborhood – parishioners have moved away from the city
- Reaching out to new residents of the area

Session 1

Key Challenges/We Need Help With...

- "Membership"-Transient parishioners due to the increasingly high cost of living in Chicago.
- Our location in a depressed neighborhood
- How to let people in the neighborhood know we are here
- Breaking down barriers
- Assimilating the community
- Changing to a ministry stewardship based approach
- With the community changing (ethnicity) how do we acclimate our lives and Faith with theirs?
- How to engage people who live in a culture of poverty about Orthodoxy from fundamentalist backgrounds.
- Engaging a mentality of poverty from a middle class perspective
- How to engage "the poor" as persons and not as "the needy" or projects.
- Ministries outside of our own people (we do only safe ministries)
- Shifting out of low gear in our work with the community
- What have people learned about dealing with the "professional beggar": what process of discernment do we use to tell who really should be helped?
- Classes/catechetical approach for neighborhood people who are functionally illiterate.
- Orthodox Lifestyle is a "hard sell", even among baptized Orthodox Christians within an increasingly liberal society that embraces relativism and political correctness.
- Overall sense of "distraction" from "churchly things" caused by society's "busyness."
  Need to find strategies to counteract the loss of young adults after high school graduation.
- Getting the people to come to Church
- Sunday AM only participation
- Breaking out of ruts
- Being one of 30+ Orthodox parishes (6 OCA) in our city

Session 1

What is Working For Us

- Outreach to (typical Orthodox) immigrants
- Speakers from outside Orthodox resources
- Outreach to college
- Invite neighbors to church with flyers
- Diversity is accepted
- Working with schools and food bank
- Vesperal liturgies
- Spiritual life center –used on a daily basis; attracts neighbors
- Referral service
- Outreach to shelters, campus neighbors
- Block party
- Show we care about neighborhood
- Teach about Tradition in homilies
- Reaching out to university and medical center
- Focus on resources for people in need
- Ministry based parish council
- Desire to have all parishioners in a ministry
- Cambridge professor provides bible study
- Dinners and events for socializing
- Festival to engage neighborhood
- Frequently updated websites and newsletters
- Neighborhood building are historical
- Decision to stay (in neighborhood) and renovate means conscious commitment
- Ministries outside of parish
- Engage neighbors; outreach to neighborhood
- Parishioners are not concerned with parking or declining neighborhood
- Feeding 90-100 persons by collecting food from local stores
- Bookstore and coffee house are open to public
- Willingness to catechize neighborhood people who are illiterate
- Stewardship; Admin; youth
- Reaching out to younger Orthodox people working in the area
- People deciding to attend here even though farther away
- Student prayer books for campus

Session 1

What is Working For Us

- Finances/stewardship
- Greater & greater youth participation
- Wider participation in outreach programs
- more inflow of new people/conversions/baptisms
- Formation of Parish Life Committee has helped develop new parish activities.
- Constant addition of new converts, although small in number annually.
- Parish Council has become more diversified, with excellent collegial attitude.
- We had to "re-identify" ourselves to us, our Lost Sheep, & our neighbors/community.
- Realizing & keeping GOD first, we began a series of events/activities to promote our Faith & to develop social relationships that would help get us noticed and to keep folks interested.
- We also stressed our own fellowship & Christian Education for adults and kids.
- Collaborating with neighborhood organizations who may have access to greater resources.
- Teaching series aimed at "catechism for the catecized."
- Religious Education has taken an even more professional stature. New teachers, new programs help build interest and support.
- Our Outreach program. Under fine leadership service projects involve our neighbors in increasingly useful ways.
- Congregational response has become more spirited. Visitors take note and are favorably impressed.
- All the parishioners are involved in welcoming guest and bring friend to the services.
  I tell my parishioners in the sermons that this Church will only grow if we all bring people. It's a call which we must all answer.
- Team work.
- Ministries, service and fellowship opportunities
- Parish Administration
- Liturgical life, preaching and teaching are said to be more vibrant
- More Frequent (5-6 per week)/Vibrant Worship
- Effective Collaborative Leadership
- The Ministry of the Spiritual Life Center

Listing of Current Urban Ministries by Attending Parishes

Compiled from preconference survey

- After School Arts Program (arts in schools suffering cuts or elimination)
- Annual free Block Party
- Involvement with neighborhood issues & upkeep
- Small public playground provided in parish property
- participation in city-wide interfaith organization addressing urban social/economic issues - impacts neighborhood
- Deborah's Place- Serving meals to at a homeless women's shelter
- Pacific Garden Mission- Clothing drive for the homeless
- Contributions to local food bank located at nearby church.
- Invitations extended to attend parish's annual food festival as free guests.
- Open-house held on a Saturday recently
- Opened church as refuge when nearby housing unit caught on fire.
- Assist food needs to legitimate people with restaurant certificates
- Feeding off a successful campaign to feed the poor at holidays, we have continued collecting & distributing food/items to the poor.
- We have created events that fill needs of the area (including: Santa Claus photos and cookies, designing Easter Eggs, Internet cafe in our hall, after school programs to tutor, talking to the neighbors, etc)
- Participating in neighborhood events and organizations

Listing of Current Urban Ministries by Attending Parishes

Compiled from preconference survey

- Governor's Advisory Board for Faith-based and Community based Initiatives.
- Habitat for Humanity
- Food Voucher program
- Nursing home visits
- Blood drive
- trash day
- Partnering with food pantry
- helping with meals for school age children
- partnering with "Life Centers“
- Saturday Lunch Program
- Outdoor beautification projects, including making graffiti disappear.
- Growing involvement with the local commissions
- food bank.
- Informal networking
- Art-A-Whirl
- Neighborhood Nite Out
- Parishioner Helping Parishioners Program
- Ecuadorean Volley-Ball group
- Church School and Youth Group service projects
- Food card distribution to area hungry
- Enabling gardens with fresh produce for local shelter.
- Occasional emergency referral drop-ins at the Spiritual Life Center.

What I Learned

About two thirds of the way through day one we asked we asked people to contribute a few post it notes about what they'd learned or what seemed important to them so far... here are few contributions: (some are admittedly unclear due to limited space or unclear context)

- I learned about Focus North America – a means and a model for us all to serve.

- Finally we have a group within the church that can coordinate services for the people in need
- It is great to see Orthodoxy stepping up to the plate in an organized fashion putting into action that which is in all of our hearts.
- Hope inspiration to network with other Orthodox to set up service work/agency
- Inspired to be more prophetic/courageous
- I'm not the only one who has noticed that there is a current of racism that undermines the work of our church
- I'm encouraged to hear that so many people are doing so much good mission work
- Parish hall used for service level ministries
- Start small; be consistent
- Ministries "for the poor" or "with the poor" or "Are we the poor?" or "Am I the poor?"
- I learned that an essential element to service of the poor is a personal presence in their community and a knowledge of their personal life struggles
- Existing with the poor not for the poor
- To give and not to judge
- Instead of handing out money give vouchers and gift cards to a local store
- Cross level current resources so that you may expand into new ministries
- That we (our parish) are not alone in our struggles large the church is and that we are all working to help
- A lot of Orthodoxy is just showing up
- Idea of a spiritual life center
- God does not call to equip He equips the called
- I learned people cannot get a social security card without an address

What I Learned *(cont'd)*

- Church property could and should be used not just on Sunday for the betterment of those in need of space
- Don't non-urban parishes need to evangelize too?
- It is a better thing to feed the hungry than to raise the dead St John Chrysostom
- Do not let space and bricks and mortar be the issue. Building a new church sometimes puts the focus on paying a mortgage and loses the focus on the ministry of the church
- Stay where we are. Don't move your church. Start a mission.
- Possibilities of in parish free clinics
- Humane shelters model does not work; shelter first model more effective
- I was inspired by the likeminded individuals that were talking an present at this time.
- Was enlightened to realize there is a great hope to help others & address problems
- Need to provide a home setting first, the chances for success increase significantly & people can grow long term
- Why shouldn't our diocese or our deaneries NOT promote and facilitate urban suburban partnerships? This should be an outcome of this conference

Additional Day One Photos

Workshop Notes

Day Two

Fix This Urban Parish

This section is based on specific mythical yet recognizable case studies

Fix this Urban Parish

Case 1 – Heritage parish in Decline

What are Key Strengths of this parish?

- Parish life is still reasonably strong
- Lots of possibilities if you stay in the neighborhood
- The building is a curiosity generator. What more can we ask than people to approach with "honest curiosity".
- A love is here. For one another; for heritage, for building
- The parish has great stories. (Though this can be a negative also.)
- In some sense there is a past history of evangelistic success with preaching the gospel
- There has been sacrifice by those who were/are part of the parish

Fix this Urban Parish

Case 1 – Heritage parish in Decline

What assets and strengths are underutilized?

- Look at leadership
- You have a pool of knowledge time resources to tap into
- Question to ask: Why Me? Why Was I sent here?
- What about money Can tap into endowment?
- Endowment is not adequate – can create an illusion of success
- Current number of parishioners not enough to sustain
- Trustee mentality –can they envision a real change?
- Is the congregation in love with the church – or with the building
- Can re-imagine this as a smaller urban parish in collaboration with others
- Value newcomers – explore the ways
- Understand the history of the parish and the real story – to unlock myths and help apply similar energy to today's challenges. Rwquires sensitive pastoral approach
- Board/parish council – time to ask/respond to new questions

Fix this Urban Parish

Case 1 – Heritage parish in Decline

What actions can we take?

- Unlock any assumptions about what /who we are?
- Hire a youth director – use endowment funds
- Ask two questions:
  - Do you want to grow? Yes or No?
  - If yes why? (If no why?)
- Are we satisfied with the way we live our life/lives in Christ?
- What is the vision?
- What choices must be made?
- Size of parish; engaging volunteers from the community
- Stay lean and mean (There were a couple of sub themes that ran through the discussion. Some seemed to push for a view of keeping the parish "small" 150 people; with strong community; limited spending on staff or programs.
- What are the consequences of <u>not</u> acting?
- What are you producing by your behavior in the community (neighborhood) Love of Christ?
- Interfaith collaboration
- Keeping a beautiful spiritual landmark as part of the community
  - Total community appreciation
  - A responsibility of more than the parish other churches, deanery, diocese
- We are functional Congregationalists
- Where is the future of our Orthodox Church –from within? Staying lean and mean.
- Our children need to see Orthodoxy as their faith – not the faith of their parents
- Possibilities of clustering with Orthodox parishes
- Pursue acts of engaging the community using what Orthodox liturgical life does best.

Fix this Urban Parish

Case 1 – Heritage parish in Decline

Who Will Come to This Parish?

- Same kind of people who are already there
- People who are "different" than are already there
  - University students
  - Faculty
  - People inquiring about Orthodoxy
- Find out what attracted the newer parishioners
- Locals form neighborhood
- A robust educational program may attract people who are interested in exploring Orthodoxy
- This parish, due to its heritage, distinctive edifice, hilltop perch and elder statesman status/stature can properly, yet humbly claim to be first among equals for the city of "Rustville" . It can be a beacon for Orthodoxy. (almost literally) "*Orthodox Rustville*". A right – no a duty – to be a magnet and the center for all local orthodox parishes..

Fix this Urban Parish

Case 2– Deep Decline – 20 people left

- Prayer needed; ask every monastery to pray for this parish
- Recolonize this parish.
- Import 4 families, from other parishes, who want to be missionaries here in America. They can spend 6-24 months here or become permanent.
- Make sure a couple of these people are good singers. Much discussion on the importance of strengthening liturgy – particularly singing. Many felt this was an absolute necessity. Others less so.
- Make parish into an urban monastery.
- Address/understand the animosity that exists between the urban and one suburban parish.

Fix This Urban Parish

Case 3 Stay or Go?

Reasons to Stay

- Presence of church exhibits need
- It's easier to stay
- This group can't afford to leave and build a new church
- It would be hard to sell the building/ property; not that valuable
- It is attractive on the inside; welcoming

Reasons to Go

- Go –before it is too late
- Neighborhood is hindering potential for new growth
- There seems to be no desire for neighborhood outreach; is there a reason to think this can change? If not why be there
- The parish just needs a change the myriad of efforts associated with a move may provide a jump start
- No plan of outreach

Fix this Urban Parish

Case 2– Deep Decline – 20 people left

After this discussion the 40 or so people present were asked to "vote" (as if they were parishioners) as to whether they would stay or go. Almost everybody voted to stay in this location.

What Would Change The Decision

After the vote we asked what factors might change the outcome of this vote. What would sway your decision to stay?

- Take away one or more of the positives (reasons to stay)
- If it became apparent that, despite reasonable efforts, the community was incapable of change. (essentially wrt to neighborhood outreach). "We are who we are – and that's it."
- If it became physically dangerous for parishioners.
- If it became logical to establish a new center in a new location. *(The church is today in center of its membership. If a preponderance of members seemed to over time be located in a particular quadrant of the city that might make a move more logical or effective.)*
- This parish can work to start a mission in the suburbs. *(But of course this raises many questions which we did not time to work through.)*

Other Workshop Sessions

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Urban Parish Characteristics

Healthy

- Liturgical services
  - Full schedule
  - Ongoing prayer
  - The gang is not all there all the time
  - Educational and promoting understanding
- Vision of excellence and improvement
- Scheduling of services
  - Sensitivity to traffic etc. --Appropriate times
  - Well prepared and implemented services
  - Community participation
- Mission to non English speaking
- Qualities of active service
  - Need based not self serving
  - Laity involved
  - Gospel based
- Appreciation of Talents/gifts
- Appreciation of diversity
- Full spectrum of ages
- Caring

Not So Healthy

- Attitude of we are here for "our people"
- Hostility toward neighbors
- Fence, barbed wire
- Cheap stingy
- Hoarding
- Bingo
- Poorly repaired
- Building rich only
- Lack of vision
- Status quo vision
- In fighting

Summary of Discussion about Theme

Vocation of an urban Parish in the 21st Century

Urban vs. Suburban

- Intentional choice
- Ownership
- Material need (and opportunity) in urban setting is greater
- Problems in both
- Urban parish can set good example

What is Needed from the Diocese/OCA to Assist Urban Parishes

- Basics –scripture; liturgics
- Language translations
- Cluster coalitions across deaneries –urban suburban parishes
- Cross jurisdictional collaboration
- Interfaith collaboration
- Continue the process started in this summit
- Shared best practices –successful stuff
- Policy on when to close a parish
- What to do before you make a decision
- Clarification of legal issues regarding closing/ownership
- A proactive approach –what to do when
- Use of the parish health model

How Could this Summit Have Been Improved?

- Materials ahead of time
- Names of participants with contact info
- More open space time for discussion and dialogue
- Fewer presentations

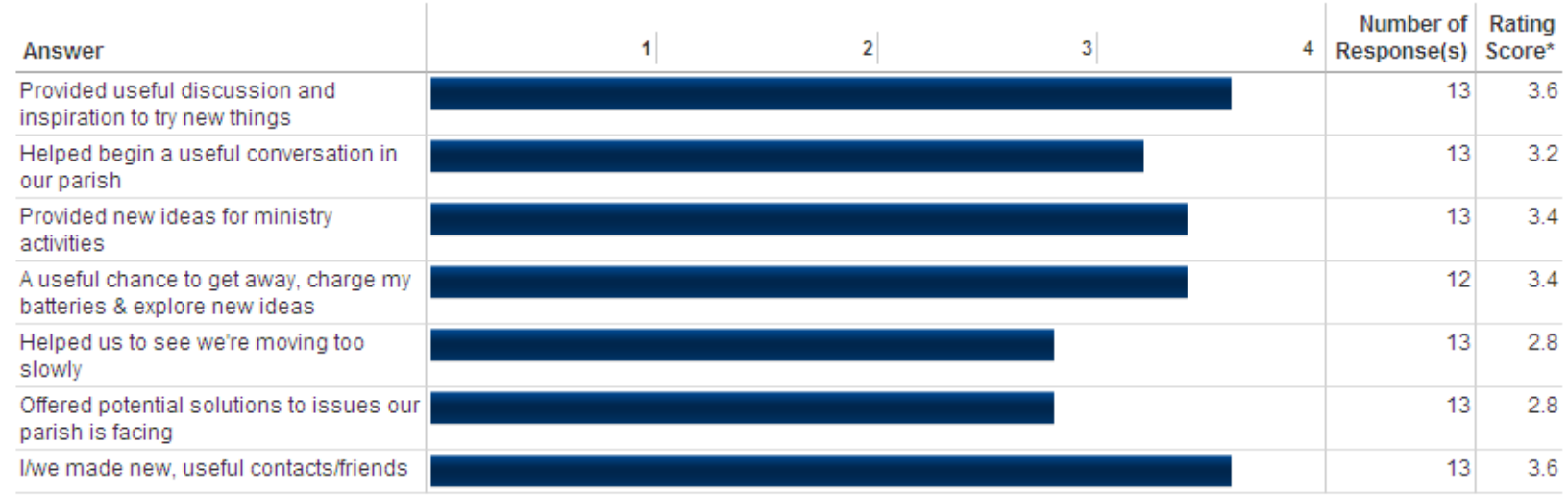
Selected Feedback Survey Results

Only 13 attendees filled out the post summit survey – so you can be your own judge as to whether these results are an actual reflection – or not!

Attendees Benefits

2 **To what extent did you receive the following benefits from attending the Urban Parish Summit?**

1 = Not a benefit , **2** = A tiny benefit , **3** = Some benefit , **4** = Significant Benefit



Answer	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Provided useful discussion and inspiration to try new things	13	3.6
Helped begin a useful conversation in our parish	13	3.2
Provided new ideas for ministry activities	13	3.4
A useful chance to get away, charge my batteries & explore new ideas	12	3.4
Helped us to see we're moving too slowly	13	2.8
Offered potential solutions to issues our parish is facing	13	2.8
I/we made new, useful contacts/friends	13	3.6

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

Comments

- *Aside from St Gregory's, we're probably the farthest advanced in this, and we didn't need to be convinced of anything. But our group still found the conference very encouraging and useful.*
- *Good networking was possible. Further opportunities would be great*

Facilities Comments

- No problems.....close to hotel
- inspiring to see the cathedral and St. Michael Church
- Food was fine....try to keep it healthy!!
- Would preferred to have stayed at the Cathedral location. It was a great 'on-site' location to work in. Well fed. Maybe some more yogurt or little less of the sweets .
- I thought the venues were excellent. Food was great. enjoyed the fellowship.
- Fine - good hospitality.
- All were at least adequate.
- Well done!
- My delegate did observe that it was much easier to hear people at the Broadview Heights facility, than in the echo at St. Theodosius... although seeing St. Theodosius was a treat in itself, and gave us an urban context.
- The meeting facility was adequate and appropriate for the meeting.
- I thought both facilities were fine. If you are going to be talking about urban issues, I think it helps to be in an urban environment. The stark differences between the two sites, really pointed out how they exist on almost two different planets.
- Great job by all. My first experience in participating in such a church event -- very eye opening and most enjoyable.

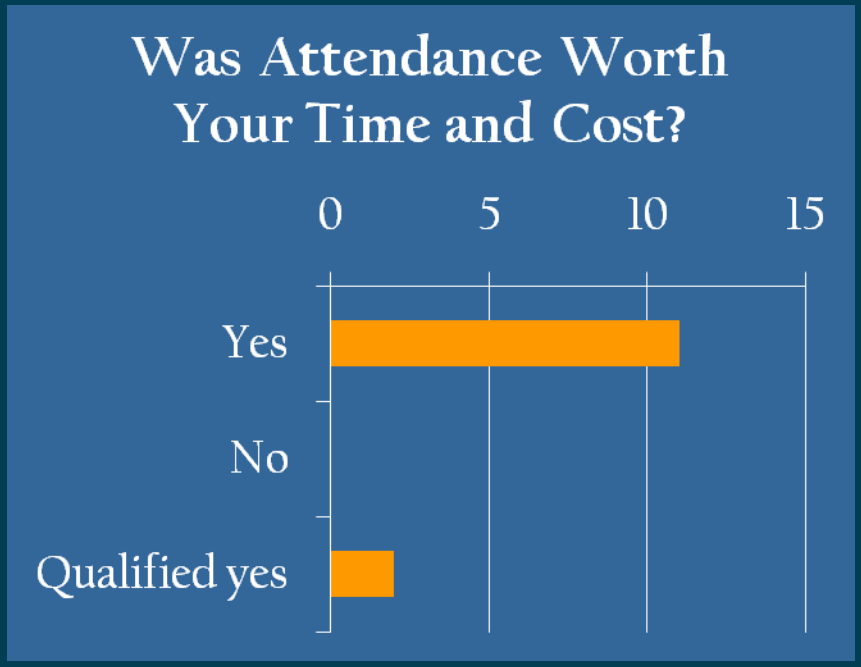
If You Could Change Just One Thing…

- Provide an evening gathering so everyone could mingle and get to know each other
- A panel discussion might be something to consider.
- Linking like parishes would have been better for small groups; at least that's my thinking. Perhaps begin with a parish sketch. Location. Major problems. Opportunities, etc. Would help to get a feel for the place.
- More time the first day for discussion. fewer presenters and more group discussion.
- A better mix/coordination of presentation and discussion, with a little tighter control.
- I felt high jacked at times. (*essentially by attendees (priests) on soapboxes*)
- Keep comments to 2 or 3 minutes.. Some improvement in speakers. People should keep to the assignment.
- Keep to the schedule. Shorten the talks.
- Okay, sue me.. but I would have liked a sermon from some theologically minded person, about the biblical/gospel basis for this kind of ministry. I missed the pep talk, in other words, from an orthodox theological point of view.
- Have talks dealing not just with outreach, but also community dialogue techniques, as well as motivations within the parish.
- Talks on partnering and its value would be good.
- More discussion and networking sessions. I heard some really powerful stuff.
- You might have a specific focus next time, so that you can have specific actionable things that can be done. I think it was not clear what we were to take back and work on.A
- Maybe for one exercise or brainstorming session, break-up the groups so you have networking an sharing of ideas in small groups.

Worth Your Time?

Comments:

- It recharged our batteries and let us know that we are not alone in this problem.
- Related to previous experiences as a priest, but not present parish situation.
- More + than - as per evaluation.
- Would do it again. Honesty is essential and I thought people felt comfortable enough to let their guard down.

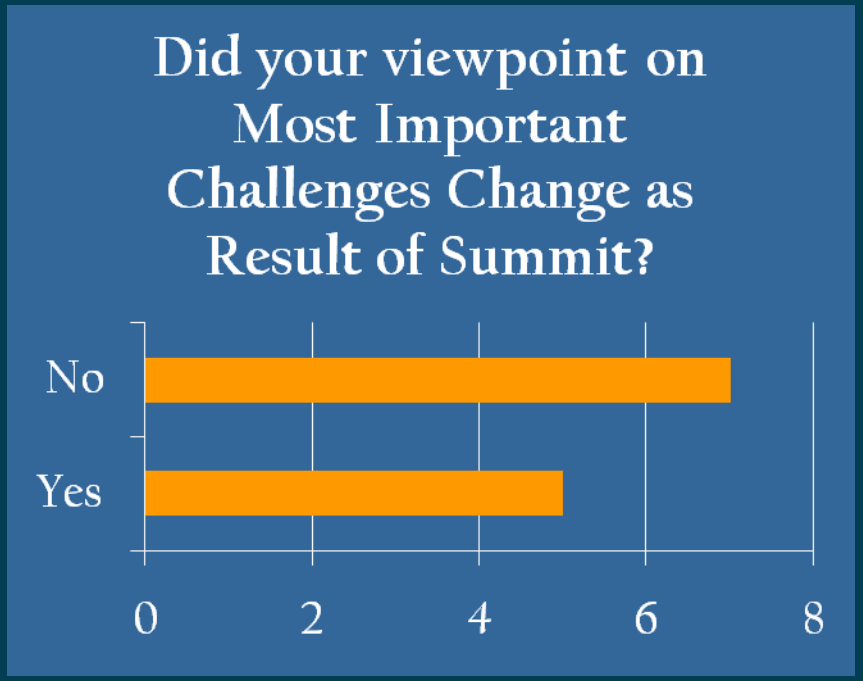


What do you now see as the most important challenge(s) facing Orthodox Urban parishes in the next ten years?

- Throwing good money after bad..... Upsetting the older parishoners who have said,"Keep these doors open until I am buried "
- What could happen if there is a massive return to the city in the next 10 years....?
- Staying alive for all that means.
- Staying focused on American issues avoiding anything diaspora.
- Connecting center and suburb. This one is needed by all kinds of groupings and perhaps especially religious groups.
- Coping with and accommodating changing ethnic/linguistic demographics.
- Aging issues with congregations that are now mostly middle age.
- Planting new parishes and generously reaching out to new populations from old parishes.
- Putting good will and ideas into action. If the economy tanks too much, urban situations will become more difficult.
- Most urban parishes have expensive and growing maintenance costs - a very serious drain on financial resources. If they are to be a platform for ministries, ways have to be found for these expensive assets to be at least as much revenue neutral as possible
- Most urban parishes have expensive and growing maintenance costs - a very serious drain on financial resources. If they are to be a platform for ministries, ways have to be found for these expensive assets to be at least as much revenue neutral as possible
- Embracing a new identity for the orthodox parish
- Hate to use this -- but are we doing a good enough job marketing?

What do you now see as the most important challenge(s) facing Orthodox Urban parishes in the next ten years?

- Embracing the new opportunities in the evolving environment they find themselves. The only alternative to embracing the new opportunities are to slowly fade out of existence. This would be unfortunate for those parishes and for the salvation and well-being of the neighborhoods surrounding the parish.
- First, bringing more neighbors into our parishes. Save more souls.
- Become integrated parts of the fabric of the communities they live in and serve. The change from ethnic homes is happening, but the transition to the next thing is the dangerous and exciting place we find ourselves.
- Maintaining our youth in our faith -- marriages to other faiths are taking many of our young adults away from our faith.
- Financial stability of small parishes who cannot group their efforts with other Orthodox churches due to distance.
- Major repair work that will need to be done to keep the temples open and accessible (ADA) assistive listening systems, HVAC over hauls, security and safety concerns of our buildings and property....
- Tracking the movement of our graying members - ie, more and more people are moving to other parts of the country for cost or weather or both - are we tracking this and developing strategic action plans to locate churchs or facilities for Orthodox? Not everyone moves to an area where there is an church or they need to travel great distances to the church, as you get older, you are less likely to travel that distance.

Did Your Opinion Change?

- Learned things, but believe we are on a genuine outreach track.
- Desire to bring our programs into better coordination and have a more holistic approach to neighborhood outreach.
- I think it was a necessary and outstanding start!
- Enjoyed listening to what other churches are doing.
- I think folks at the summit know this. In fact it was really encouraging