



# ST. PAUL

CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL

## What in the world is the C.A.T. anyway?

The Congregational Assessment Tool, or C.A.T., is a proprietary assessment instrument administered by Holy Cow! Consulting that helps church leaders across the country make critical decisions and helps parishes take the necessary next steps.

### **Holy Cow!?! That's a pretty silly name.**

They would be the first to agree, but it got your attention, right? The Holy Cow! team has gained a great deal of insight and experience from their work with over 3,000 congregations, schools and non-profits across the country. St. Paul's will benefit because the responses we give can be measured against the results from the thousands of churches they have surveyed to give us better insight into how we should plan our future success.

### **Why is St. Paul's doing this in the first place?**

On the attached pages is a brief slide presentation that discusses how this survey ties into St. Paul's centennial strategic planning process.

### **How will the survey results be used?**

A survey is a lot like a camera; it takes a picture of who we are as a church. Father George and the strategic planning task force will incorporate the opinions of you and your fellow parishioners into a strategic plan that lays the groundwork for the next 100 years of success at St. Paul's.

### **I'm not sure I want other people at St. Paul's to know my opinions.**

No one will. Your answers are confidential and the C.A.T. is 100% anonymous. In fact, there is no way for anyone to know if you even take the survey (although we really hope you do!) After submitting your responses, the data will go directly to Holy Cow's database, where it will be combined with the responses of everyone else at St. Paul's who takes the C.A.T. At St. Paul's, all we will see is a data-filled report of the collective responses after the survey.

We want everyone to be honest, so confidentiality and anonymity are of the utmost importance to us.

## **I am still a little worried because my opinions about St. Paul's are not all positive.**

Growing up we all heard "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." But we also learned that "Honesty is the best policy." With the C.A.T., we need you to be honest, even if it's not favorable. If there is an aspect of the church that parishioners feel is lacking and needs improvement, there is nothing Father can do to address it if no one speaks up.

## **Okay, so how do I take the C.A.T.?**

On Monday, January 10, if we have your e-mail address on file, you will receive an e-mail from St. Paul's with a unique web link that has been created using a service called Survey Monkey. When you click on this link, it takes you directly to the C.A.T. You can take the C.A.T. on any type of device, and you will have until January 28 to submit your responses.

## **That's why you've been asking for my e-mail address. I didn't get around to giving it to you; can I still take the C.A.T.?**

Yes, but hurry up and give us your e-mail. You can submit it by scanning the QR code on the posters at each exit of the church or enter it through the St. Paul's website or Facebook page at the "Take the C.A.T.!" link.

## **How long will the C.A.T. take?**

You should plan to spend at least 30 minutes taking the survey.

## **That seems like a long time, and I am pretty busy.**

As Catholics, we are constantly asked to donate our time, talent and treasure. This is an instance where we really, really, really need your time. Planning the future of a parish that's been here for a century is a big undertaking and will involve some major decisions. Father George wants to get it right, and to do so, it's important that he has the full picture of how the church is doing in its many different aspects. We could shorten the survey by guessing what people may think about certain church functions, but with parishioners from so many different backgrounds, our guesses would probably be wrong in many cases.

Please take the time to take the C.A.T.; it's the most important thing you can do for St. Paul's in 2022.

## **Can I stop halfway through the C.A.T., save my answers, and come back and finish it later?**

Unfortunately, no. It's best if folks don't over-think issues; your first impression is usually the most accurate and honest one, and honesty is what we need. Please plan on setting some dedicated time aside to complete the survey.

## **If it's that long, there must be a lot of writing involved.**

Actually, no. The questions are mostly multiple choice, asking how you feel about certain things. Other questions will ask you to rank things in order of importance or preference. Finally, there are some more basic questions, like which mass you attend and how long you have been a parishioner at St. Paul's.

## **But what if I want to share more information?**

We appreciate people's passion about St. Paul's and are always interested in feedback, positive or otherwise. But the nature of the C.A.T. does not lend itself well to narrative answers. We will send out over 700 surveys to parishioners, and what we are looking to get back is data that represents an integrated measurement of the impressions and beliefs of all parishioners, not just those with the strongest opinions. The combined results will tell us the areas where we are doing well, and those that parishioners would like to see improved. And once we understand the areas that need to be addressed, at that point a more robust dialogue will be important as we advance the strategic planning process.

## **Will there be any math?**

There will be no math. We promise.

## **If I don't have e-mail or a computer, am I still able to take the C.A.T.?**

Of course. If you contact the Parish Office, we can arrange a time to have you visit St. Paul's and answer the survey on one of our laptop computers. Alternatively, we do have paper copies available, but we would greatly prefer you to submit your answers electronically.

## **My spouse doesn't use e-mail; is it okay for me to take the C.A.T. for both of us?**

Do so at your own risk! No matter how long you've been married, no one shares 100% of their spouses' opinions. And we do want everyone's opinion. Let us know if this is an issue, and we can make arrangements to hear from both of you.

## **I'm relatively new to St. Paul's and I may not know the answers to a lot of the questions. Should I still take the C.A.T.?**

Absolutely! In fact, it's extremely important that we get your views. If you recently joined St. Paul's, we need to know what made you choose us, and what will make you become a long-term parishioner. With the C.A.T., there are no right or wrong answers, just your beliefs and experiences.

## **Okay, I am ready to take the C.A.T. Will I get a copy of the results?**

The report generated by the C.A.T. is over 20 pages long, and like reading a medical report, it requires a professional interpretation. While the full report will be available in the rectory for review, we will distribute a more user-friendly summary to parishioners that highlights the key findings. If there is sufficient interest, we hope to host a town hall this Spring to discuss the results, answer questions and receive additional feedback.

## **I just got home from mass and have another question.**

E-mail us anytime at [TakeTheCat@spsjax.org](mailto:TakeTheCat@spsjax.org). This is the most important thing you can do to help St. Paul's in 2022, so we are happy to answer any and all questions you may have.



**#1. Scan the QR  
Code and  
submit your  
e-mail**

**#2. Take the  
C. ongregational  
A. sssessment  
T. ool**

**#3. Help us plan  
the future of  
St. Paul's**



# Why Strategic Planning?

- **To learn, assess and decide....**
  - **.... where are we right now as a faith community?**
    - What do our parishioners really think? What are our strengths? Weaknesses? Opportunities? Threats?
  - **....where do we as a community want to be in the future?**
    - Can we collectively envision a desired future that builds on our strengths and captures opportunities for improvement and growth?
  - **....how will we get there?**
    - What are a few broadly defined goals and strategies that we should focus on?
  - **....how will we know if we are successful?**
    - Where do we devote our limited time and resources for the greatest benefit?



# Why Now?

- As we approach the Centennial anniversary of our parish, Father wants to engage our entire community in laying the groundwork for the next 100 years of success
- 2019 discussions for strategic planning disrupted by pandemic; it is now time to generate post-pandemic momentum to reestablish what we love about St. Paul's, and better share it with our community and each other
- We are blessed to be in a much stronger financial position than in recent years
  - How do we ensure future investments are cost-beneficial and promote our shared goals? Do we....
    - ....address deferred maintenance?
    - ....undertake capacity expansion projects to spur school enrollment growth?
    - ....expand ministry options?
    - ....improve the liturgical experience?
    - ....all of the above? None of the above? Something else entirely?



# Who is involved?

The entire St. Paul's Family!  
Father wants to hear from every parishioner, parent and employee



## Congregation Assessment Tool™ (CAT)

The only benchmarked, customizable assessment designed especially for congregation planning processes to help:

- Measure the level of satisfaction and energy in the church.
- Identify the critical success factors for improving organizational climate.
- Discover where members would like to go in the future.
- Gauge readiness for change.
- Uncover potential resources you may be missing.

