

## Narrative Questions for OTM Form

1. *Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.*

Pentecost is a festive occasion on which our ethnic diversity is especially visible—and audible—when the Prayers of the People are read by native speakers in Spanish, German, French, Latin, Cebuano, Swahili, Mandarin, and Thai. Given such diversity, it makes perfect sense for us to sponsor refugee families. In late 2016, Atonement partnered with RefugeeOne to provide mentoring and tutoring to two families from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Every week for nine months, each family got two visits from volunteers who helped them learn English and navigate their new world. Whether it was something as simple as showing how the shower worked, making sure they had the right clothing for Chicago winters, going to the dentist for the first time, or celebrating a birthday, our volunteers were there. The church also helped these families outfit their homes with furniture and supplies and connected them to services to support their transition to life in Chicago. This has been enormously rewarding for newcomers and parishioners alike—an opportunity to do urgently needed work, while building relationships and practicing hospitality as Christ commanded.

2. *Describe your liturgical style and practice. If your community provides more than one type of worship service, please describe all.*

On Sundays we have three Anglo-Catholic liturgies. Rite II is celebrated at free-standing altar; celebrant wears amice, alb, cincture, stole and chasuble. Baptisms occur at 9 and 11.

**8:00 am:**

Contemplative mass. No music; two adult acolytes; Scripture lessons proclaimed by members of congregation; Gospel proclaimed in front of altar; all ministers exchange peace with congregation.

**9:00 am:**

Joyous family mass; Liturgy of the Word celebrated in center aisle; one lesson and Gospel; child acolytes and adult MC; entire congregation exchanges peace; music sung by all; at Eucharistic prayer, congregation gathers around altar until dismissal.

**11:00 am:**

Choir mass with many assisting clergy; deacon and subdeacon have been used by interim; former rector wore cope for entire Liturgy of the Word. Adult servers and MC; congregation sings hymns and choir sings mass parts and anthems; after mass on last Sunday of the month, Angelus or Regina Coeli is sung at Marian shrine. Incense and bells are used lavishly.

**Daily Masses:**

Monday through Friday celebrated by assisting clergy; Saturday Healing Mass celebrated by rector, preceded by Marian Rosary led by congregation.

**Festivals:**

On Christmas Eve, Easter, and Corpus Christi, a chamber orchestra accompanies our professional choir.

3. *How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?*

The people of Atonement have many skills and talents which we are eager to share. If we see a need for a ministry, we create it (e.g. the all-volunteer St. Cecilia Choir, which sings summer masses when our regular choir is on vacation). Many non-stipendiary priests assist as celebrants and preachers and officiate at weekday masses, and the 95-year-old retired bishop of Chicago, James Montgomery, attends and sometimes even celebrates. Lay parishioners fill the offices of MC, lector, crucifer, thurifer, acolyte, altar guild, singers, and ushers, as well as ringing the bells to call the neighborhood to worship. They guide Christian formation for both children and adults through teaching, mentoring, and leading small groups. Laypeople are active in church governance through Vestry and several guilds: finance, endowment, building and grounds, archives. They provide hospitality to the parish at occasional senior luncheons and coffee hours. Atonement's commitment to outreach is financed through the work of volunteers who organize an annual gala. Others work with refugees, homeless men and women, neighborhood schools, senior centers, and food pantries. Most of us understand our very presence at Atonement as a ministry, which we then live out in our daily lives.

4. *As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?*

Our spiritual needs are served by daily mass, a Saturday healing mass, and three Sunday masses to suit all temperaments, as well as other services such as choral evensong. We also have a Contemplative Prayer Group and a new theology discussion group, which meets after the Thursday morning mass. The rector and affiliated clergy conduct hospital visits and bring communion to homebound parishioners—and the assistance of so many non-stipendiary priests provides a labor-saving ministry to the rector. Two communities of religious brothers, who assist with worship, are willing and able to take a more active role in pastoral care. Counseling is available on request. Social and intellectual opportunities are afforded by Education for Ministry (EfM), occasional book groups, parish forums, coffee hour, and senior gatherings over meals. Some members attend regular AA or NA meetings on the premises. As for physical well-being—well, we do have some steep flights of stairs (though a ramp and chairlift are available for those who need them).

5. *Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.*

Atonement energetically engages with communities outside our walls through parishioner volunteerism and committed ongoing investments. Among these efforts are monetary contributions and collections of food and clothing for Care for Real, our neighborhood pantry; breakfast bags for the Epworth Men's Shelter; and the periodic assembly of hygiene kits for multiple shelters. Key events on our calendar include participating in Souper Bowl of Caring; assisting and advocating for Sarah's Circle (a women's shelter) at its annual fundraising walk; collecting backpacks and supplies for nearby elementary

schools; and conducting extensive outreach during Advent. Our church building is available as practice space for local musicians and a theater company, as a polling place, and as a home for AA and NA meetings. Atonement maintains relationships with other local churches, synagogues, and mosques through the Edgewater Community Religious Association. Parishioners serve as representatives on diocesan committees and commissions, while our retired clergy regularly serve other churches. The parish is integrated with the Southeast Mexico Diocese companionship program, and makes contributions to Episcopal Relief and Development to address disasters and international relief.

**6. *How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?***

We have a number of outreach activities that take place outside our community. In addition to all the ministries described above, we cook and serve meals for a nearby women's shelter (Sarah's Circle)—a particularly rewarding effort because we have time over a shared meal to foster relationships. Other local outreach efforts include senior dinners; a pet blessing around St. Francis' Day; a safe-space Halloween party for Edgewater residents; an Easter egg hunt; and a World AIDS Day concert and reception. For the last several years we've offered "ashes to go" on Ash Wednesday, in which members of the clergy and assistants (properly vested, of course!) set up a station on a busy street corner at rush hour and offer ashes to willing recipients. More recently we also started offering "palms to go" on Palm Sunday. With reactions ranging from playful to profound, it's a fun and touching ministry, and a visible reminder of the church's presence within the broader community. We also bear joyful witness in the neighborhood through our processions on Corpus Christi and Palm Sunday (led by bagpipes and a live donkey).

**7. *Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?***

Many of our community outreach programs are well-established and go back a long way. However, one recent and successful liturgical ministry started within the last five years is Solemn Choral Evensong (contact: Organist and Choirmaster Charles Sega). It's brought beauty and reverence to the parish and is helping connect new people to an old tradition. Another recent ministry is our annual Spring Gala (contact: Greg Bradley). The gala has been a highly successful fundraiser for the Church of the Atonement, but it's also a real, bona fide ministry. All are welcome, and the parish makes sure that even those who can't contribute to the fundraising dimension can still attend and feel welcome. It has become a highly anticipated event where people can meet, catch up, reminisce, contribute, and enjoy fellowship, conversation, and good times. For those able to contribute, it's also a way to combine companionship with stewardship, as the gala helps fund the various outreach ministries of the church. It's been a great success: fun for participants, but also with a sense of meaning and ministry.

**8. *How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?***

We aim to build a presence that will keep the best of the Anglo-Catholic tradition and the Oxford Movement alive for new generations. At Atonement we're not afraid to think and talk about our future. For instance, we are cultivating an endowment fund and actively renovating our physical plant. Although we are a largely adult parish, we recently introduced the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to attract more families with young children. Through EfM and other educational opportunities, we stay theologically up to date and prepare our people for ministry as we look for creative, effective forms of outreach to the poor of our community and the world. We have sponsored several candidates for the priesthood through discernment committees, as well as training seminarians, and we promote an active, visible religious life. In addition to the national Brotherhood of St. Gregory, the local Community of the Mother of Jesus was founded here at Atonement. In a culture that sees itself as "spiritual but not religious," we maintain the biblical (and countercultural) practice of worshipping together in mutual responsibility and care.

**9. *What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?***

Atonement feels called to use our time, talents, and treasure to extend God's love for us by supporting the life and ministry of our parish—in whatever ways we as individuals can best contribute. Many outlets are available to donate time and talents—the Vestry, Altar Guild, Coffee Guild, Endowment Guild, Finance, Outreach, Education, Hospitality, and Preservation and Restoration. We are blessed not only by members' energy and commitment but by how many *different* people are involved across these efforts. Our approach to pledging, emphasized by our former rector and endorsed by our congregation, is simple: strive for 100% participation, even if it's only a dollar a week. Individuals pledge at whatever level they can. But we trust that as long as we obtain near-universal commitment, we will meet our goals and continue to thrive. Over time, we have done exactly that. In the last two years, good stewardship has allowed us to maintain our beautiful historic building by installing a new roof, air conditioning, a sound system, lighting enhancements, and a new boiler for the rectory. Our newly renovated kitchen will be completed soon. 10% of our budget is set aside for local outreach and the national church.

**10. *What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?***

There's not much. Atonement is a large city parish, but it is also very much a neighborhood parish. It has a unique history in that, over a period of fifty-six years, we had just two rectors: Dean Rice for forty-five years and John David van Dooren for eleven. Because both were deeply loved by the congregation, there weren't many occasions of conflict. This was also due to their pastoral personalities. If small conflicts arose between persons, they were graciously handled by the rector, and if necessary the issue was referred to the vestry. Recently a proposed change in the 9 a.m. mass led to some disagreement, with one person telling the interim rector that "the congregation" objected. After prayer, another congregant spoke with several others and asked the rector

please not to let one person speak for all, but also encouraged him to introduce any changes slowly and explain them clearly to bring everyone on board.

**11. *What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?***

Our experience has been that prayer shapes our belief. Our celebrations of the Eucharist have enabled us to embrace changes in the church. For example, women priests were first invited to preach, and once the congregation had warmed to them they also concelebrated and celebrated the Eucharist, held days of reflection for the parish, and spearheaded our outreach programs. When the former rector was called, a few people left because he had a same-sex partner, but most parishioners embraced them both and affirmed the holiness of their relationship. After same-sex marriage became legal, the parish naturally celebrated the marriages of same-sex couples who were part of the congregation. Whenever possible, our altar party includes ministers diverse in ethnicity and gender.

**12. *Please provide **FOUR** WORDS describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.***

Anglo-Catholic, pastoral, inspiring, humble