

Our Journey ahead...

February/March

- Analyse and review all questionnaires (Young people, clergy, parish and individual)
- Bishop Séamus' Calls to Prayer in the diocese

April/May

- Responses prepared for every parish
- Meeting with deans and episcopal vicars

June/July

- Forward Together in Hope Team meet with parish representatives and clergy in the North and South of the diocese
- Parishes receive 'Observations', Liturgical Resources, Good Practice summary, Summaries of all questionnaires

August/September

- Parishes explore how to use the information provided

September/October/November

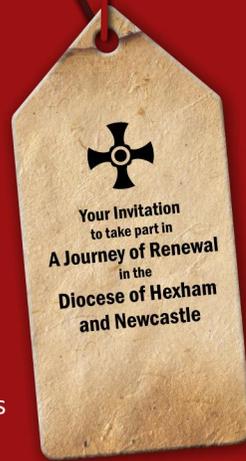
- Parishes meet to look at everything provided
- Parishes look at it with their 'neighbours' to explore Partnerships
- Forward Together in Hope Team visit every Deanery/area for open meetings
- By 1st Sunday of Advent, parishes return ideas about Partnership to Forward Together in Hope Team

December

- All responses reviewed and initial recommendations prepared

January 2017

- Recommendations made to Bishop Séamus and the Diocesan Board of Directors



Glory be to the Father –
in whom we live and move
and have our being.

Glory be to the Son –
whose name we bear
and who calls each of us
to be his disciples;
to build his Kingdom
and to go out into the world
and bear its fruit.

Glory be to the Holy Spirit –
pouring out grace and guidance,
forming us and renewing us.

Inspire us all
in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
to live the Gospel,
to be open to change
and to move forward together in hope.



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FORWARD TOGETHER
IN
HOPE

Our
Journey
so far...



Our journey so far towards a viable and flourishing community in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

A Message from Bishop Séamus

I want to thank everyone in the diocese for all the prayer and reflection that is so evident in the **Forward Together in Hope** programme. Almost every community worked hard to complete the substantial parish questionnaire. Many of you have begun to look to the future, exploring how to ensure there will be viable and flourishing communities in our diocese. This leaflet explores how we can all engage with **Forward Together in Hope** in the months to come. I hope everyone will work closely with their neighbouring communities, clergy, deans and episcopal vicars as we look to the future to create helpful partnerships and explore how to develop new lay leaders in your area. It is extremely important that we continue to pray together and explore how to be friends and disciples of Jesus. If our parishes are to become 'missionary communities' we will all need the guidance of the Holy Spirit, giving us the courage to move forward together in hope.

+ Séamus



Where are we now?

You may remember that **Forward Together in Hope** is an invitation to every Catholic in the diocese, practicing or not, to think again about what it means to be a friend and follower of Jesus. We are now half way through our three year Programme of Renewal and have been looking at what makes a viable and flourishing community. At the moment, the 150 parish questionnaires are being analysed, along with over 5000 questionnaires from young people and 1720 online questionnaires from individuals. In June this year every parish will receive a response containing observations on what was provided, plus comments in the light of what young people and others

have to say. Each parish will explore all of this and look at it with their neighbouring parishes. If our estimate of having 50 active priests in our diocese in 15 years' time is correct, then there will be many more parishes without resident priests. Parishes will be supporting one another in many different ways, so we need to begin to develop and deepen good working relationships in the near future.

Communities can flourish without a resident priest, but not without leadership and the willing and enthusiastic engagement of a wide range of parishioners. Lay leadership has emerged as a necessity, so we are recruiting someone for 3 years to help develop a formation programme for lay leaders in the diocese.

It is vital that we continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will help us deepen our love of Jesus and his message. Only then can we claim to be friends and disciples of the Lord in our time and place.

Our diocese is on a journey of discovery. We all need to give thought to how we prepare to become a different diocese in the years to come. We are exploring how to respond to the call of Jesus to '*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.*' (Mt 28:19) We are exploring how to respond to Pope Francis who says to us all: '*Let us go forth, then, let us go forth to offer everyone the Life of Jesus Christ.*' (Evangelii Gaudium)