



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.

## A Time to Re-create

Here are some ideas you might like to try over the next few weeks.

### Prayer at the Midday

Catholics have traditionally prayed at noon using the Angelus - just stopping what they are doing for a couple of minutes of prayer. You are invited to get into this habit. Set an alarm for noon and either pray the Angelus, a decade of the Rosary or simply turn your mind and heart to God for a couple of minutes. You might like to include the *Praying for our Parishes* idea below.



### Praying for our Parishes

The names of two or three parishes will be posted on the Spirituality Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/SpiritualityHN](http://www.facebook.com/SpiritualityHN)) each day. Check in - click 'Like' to show that you prayed for those communities. If you are not online, we will be praying for parishes in the order they appear in the Northern Catholic Calendar.



### Make a Pilgrimage

Thousands of people come to our diocese to follow in the footsteps of our Northern Saints. When did you last do the same? This summer, choose one of the many pilgrim-places in our diocese and make a visit there.

Or, you might like to use one of the Prayer Walks available on the diocesan website (or by contacting the Spirituality Department). Draw inspiration from the places honouring the past - but pray (and be prepared to act) for those who will be following in your footsteps in the future.

## What Can You Do Now?

- Look at the prayer suggestions on the leaflet and pray for the diocese throughout the summer
- Look at the wide range of resources that have been provided
- After praying and thinking about it, complete the tear-off slip with your suggestions and hand it to your parish priest or *Forward Together in Hope* representative
- Attend meetings in the parish to look at your 'Observations' document
- Attend meetings to be held later in the year to explore Partnership and Leadership

We believe that God's desire for our diocese is that every Catholic will be part of a viable and flourishing community in order for their own faith to grow and so that they can share it with others. For that to happen each of us needs to look urgently at how we can move forward together in hope.

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FORWARD TOGETHER  
IN  
**H O P E**  
Imagine  
new ways...





## Some words from Bishop Séamus



*It is clear to me that the Holy Spirit is moving throughout our diocese. There was a great deal of work done by communities completing the very substantial questionnaire last year. There have been many lay people and clergy helping to review over 7,000 documents, surveys from young people, individuals and parishes, as well as a small team looking at comments of priests and deacons. We hope that the same Spirit will be with us now as we enter the next phase of our consultation.*

*Pope Francis tells us: 'The parish is not an outdated institution precisely because it possesses great flexibility; it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community.'*

*Now is the time when we need to fully explore flexibility, openness and missionary creativity in our diocese.*

*Over the coming months you will have the opportunity to consider how you can work in partnership with your neighbours and how clergy and lay people can work more closely together to ensure that our communities can flourish in the future. I urge you to continue praying so that we can all look ahead with faith and courage.*

+ Séamus



**FORWARD TOGETHER**  
**HOPE**  
Forward Together in Hope is now almost two years old. On 16 July 2014 Bishop Séamus launched the programme and said: 'Parish communities might indeed flourish if we became less 'parochial', if we became more aware of our neighbours, more willing to work together and explore new possibilities'.

Imagine for a moment that in 5 years' time there will be one fewer priest serving the parishes around you and that in 10 years there will be two fewer priests serving these parishes. Where will the priest be based? Where will everyone come together to celebrate Mass? Who will be responsible for the sick, sacramental preparation and parish facilities?

Now imagine that in 5 years' time we have developed a network of lay men and women trained to take on parish responsibilities. They would be making sure that the housebound are visited, children and adults are prepared to celebrate sacraments, our facilities are well used and we have a wide range of devotions and liturgy to nurture our faith.

From the responses to the questionnaires earlier this year - and people's own observations of how the Church in the North East is changing, it is clear that we need to look ahead and think differently. Together we need to make this imagining real.

Between now and Advent, every Catholic in Hexham and Newcastle is invited to help reshape the way we are in our diocese. We will have to move from focusing only on our own parish to working together in partnership with others.

Partnerships will not just include the parishes on either side of our own but also those further afield. It is very likely that parish and deanery boundaries will change so that we can use our resources more efficiently.

Imagine...

## Resources for Your Parish

Your parish priest and *Forward Together in Hope* representative have received resources which will help us all move our thinking from parish to partnership.

These include:

- **Observations** - prepared just for your parish and offering reflections on the Parish Questionnaire you all completed last year
- **A Profile of Your Parish in Numbers** - a picture of your community with charts and graphs and showing how it compares with others
- **From Parish to Partnership** - describing what every parish will be doing over the coming months
- **What our Clergy are Saying** - a powerful statement from deacons and priests about their anxieties, hopes and aspirations
- **The Way We See It** - views about the Church from almost 5,500 of our young people
- **Challenges and Hopes** - perspectives of 1720 people from around our diocese

You will also find many of these documents online at [www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk](http://www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk)



## Think about it; pray about it; do something about it

*Lord Jesus, open our minds and our hearts as we seek to discern your will for the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle*

Having read this leaflet we'd like you to think and pray about the future of the whole diocese and how things might change in your area as we move towards new partnerships.

Once you've done this - whether in quiet reflection, through discussion with others or perhaps using one of the prayer suggestions in this leaflet - please answer the questions below.

*Name of parish where you usually worship:*

*Which parishes in your area do you feel should work together in a new partnership arrangement?*

*What areas of parish life could lay people take on responsibility for in the future?*

*Do you have any other comments or ideas about how we move forward to new arrangements?*

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. **Completed forms should be given to your priest or your *Forward Together in Hope* representative.** They will be used to inform the thinking in the local area as proposals are developed for new partnerships.