

Part H – Step A – The Parish Return Form

Sections 1-5 to be completed and returned

by 23 April 2026

Section 1: Introduction

In dialogue with your community, especially young people (in line with synod guidance) reflect on your local data sheets alongside the diocesan context. Please summarise your reflections from Part E, F and G by completing this template and returning it by 23 April 2026 to discernment.returns@diocesehn.org.uk

PARISH NAME:	Holy Name
PARISH TOWN:	Jesmond Newcastle Upon Tyne
DEANERY:	B
What was the process followed to reach these conclusions? <i>E.g. clergy & laity involved, young people's voices considered, prayer & listening shaped decisions:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open meeting with presentation and discussion, advertised in newsletter/website, 50 attendees.• Discernment group of five members of Parish Council completed draft of the Parish Return Form, informed by the public meeting.• Presentation to the Parish Council and Finance Committee for discussion, editing and approval.• The resulting document publicly available on the Holy Name website with an invitation for ongoing consultation.• Outcome of discernment:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We are a growing parish (30% increase in past three years)○ We have a strong base which serves a particular and important demographic○ We have an attractive and fully accessible (5*) church and estate○ We have an extensive outreach through streaming and community impact○ We are ready to pilot a new approach to parish management	

Beacons of Mission: *Practices that either show signs of hope others could learn from, or faithful responses uniquely shaped by your local context:*

The ethos of the Holy Name is encapsulated in the welcome of our mission statement:

‘Young or old, married, single or divorced and whatever your gender or sexuality, there is a place for you in our Parish’

Jesmond is a strong, thriving community in which Holy Name plays an active part. Jesmond has the most highly educated and professional population in the North East and this is reflected in the make-up of the congregation which continues to support and share its experience and resources with the wider community.

- We have a talented congregation with growth in numbers of those taking part in Mass and parish life. Mass attendance has increased by 30% in the past three years. This increase includes young families, young adults and city centre-based workers.
- Jesmond houses a high number of university students and young professionals employed in local universities and hospitals. The parish is a key recipient of adults moving to the city and, therefore, developing their independent commitment to worship.
- Led by the Parish Deacon and a team of catechists, we have a successful delivery of RCIA and sacramental preparation programmes.
- We have a wide range and delivery of social activities that are open to wider community.
- We have an annual educational programme of talks and public lectures on matters including faith, history, literature, theology and Catholic social teaching.
- Our celebration of the liturgy in beautiful surroundings with excellence of musical direction and a committed choir and organist has a wide appeal.
- Our church hall is in constant use by the parish, Jesmond and wider community. It provides a well-maintained, well-proportioned, pleasant space for lay-led Services of the Word, prayer, discussion, education, social activities and meetings for the many Holy Name groups/clubs that are open and welcoming to all.
- We have a committed and ever-growing number of volunteers through regular publicising of opportunities, shadowing, training and support. This provides an example of facilitating the congregation to live their faith.
- Working closely with the Parish Priest, we have a highly competent, salaried administrator on whom the organisation and efficiency of the parish is greatly dependent.

Section 2: Mission Discernment

Please use the suggested prompts at **Part E of The Mission Discernment Toolkit** to guide your conversations and complete the following section.

Mission: WORSHIP - Celebrating the Sacraments as Places of Encounter
<p>Reflection and conclusions:</p> <p>The Holy Name parish has a pervading spirit of welcome, a beautiful church, a liturgy enhanced by dedicated and talented musicians, and many lay volunteers engaged at every level in supporting the mission of worship.</p> <p>The parish is thriving with a Mass attendance increase of around 30% over the past three years.</p>
<p>1. What are we proposing to do? Concrete actions: (<i>Distinguish what you will do now, next, over a longer journey and who is responsible for leading it</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to celebrate Mass on Saturdays, Sundays and weekdays for our growing congregation.• Continue to benefit from the participation and leadership of the Deacon and Religious.• Commissioned Lay Leaders, with support of the Deacon, to continue to lead Services in the absence of a priest with opportunities for discussion and communal prayer. Growth of lay leadership is anticipated over the next few months.• Continue to invest in the quality of our music and the excellence of our choir, organist and musical director.• Holy Name has a sizeable online community. We intend to continue live streaming of Masses and other Services (currently drawing an average of 500 'views' per weekend and 80+ during the week). Live streaming offers access to worship independent of time, place or circumstances.• Utilise current and emerging technologies to reach a wider community as opportunities arise.• With having a large number of parish children in non-Catholic private schools, continue to provide a vibrant Children's Liturgy which brings together parents with their families in friendship and development of the Faith. At present there is a WhatsApp group of over 30 families.• Continue Sacramental preparation programmes for Baptism, Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Marriage.• Maintain and continue to build strong lay leadership to withstand the pressure on our parish priest.
<p>Why are we proposing this? (<i>Link to Mission</i>)</p> <p>It is working - proven by the growth in participation in parish life with high levels of satisfaction expressed both verbally, in writing and in gestures of gratitude.</p> <p>It is a continuation and development of what is already in place and working well.</p>

2. Dependencies: (What will be needed to make this happen? (E.g. people, formation, finances, property decisions, Bishop approval, other parishes co-operating))

- Recognition of the identity and individuality of the community of Holy Name with people drawn from a wide area, attracted by the quality of liturgy, the beauty of surroundings and the friendly, welcoming congregation.
- Aspects of the priest's workload need to be realigned to allow him to focus exclusively on celebrating Mass, the Sacraments, to preach and to offer spiritual guidance.
- The practicalities and management of managing a parish should be devolved to strong lay leadership. This outcome requires some aspects of Canon and Charitable law to be reinterpreted for future needs.
- Improved practical support from the diocese, in particular openness to new styles of governance and management, and provision /support of necessary training and development.
- The role of the Deacon to become increasingly significant with the decline in the number of priests.
- Increased promotion of the Permanent Diaconate.
- Our high volunteer numbers will be maintained and increased further with relevant training and support allowing the flexibility to accommodate young/working population.
- An increase in the number and involvement of commissioned Lay Leaders to provide communal Services of Holy Communion in the absence of a priest.
- Continued support for the Parish Priest by an efficient, salaried administrator to ensure the ongoing organisational success of the parish.

What will be the outcome if this action cannot happen?

A loss to the city and the diocese of a significant and influential Catholic community where faith is practised and nurtured in a collaborative and socially supportive environment.

Failure and continued decline in Catholic worship.

3. How will worship be organised in the area if there are fewer priests and fewer worshippers?

- A strong, engaged, flexible and caring community such as ours is more likely to survive the scarcity of priests.
- The Deacon, Religious and commissioned Lay Leaders will increasingly provide Services within their remit to help meet congregational need. Complementary acts of worship and devotion are already being introduced and accepted.
- The use of technology will be essential with live streaming of Masses and other on-line liturgical events.
- Accessibility with good public transport and parking will continue to be key.

Mission: TEACH - Handing on the Faith

Reflection and conclusions:

The Holy Name parish is a welcoming environment in which we provide access to information, discussion and education for adults on their Faith journey, together with family-friendly teaching of the Sacraments and introduction to the Faith for the young.

1. What are we proposing to do? Concrete actions: (*Distinguish what you will do now, next, over a longer journey and who is responsible for leading it.*)

- Continue to invest in the successful Journey in Faith programme led by the Deacon and a team of lay members.
- Continue to provide preparation programmes for Baptism, Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and other sacraments.
- Continue to support our 30+ young families with the Children's Liturgy, along with the newly dedicated area in church for the children and their families, to ensure a welcoming and integrative approach to young families.
- Continue to provide our annual programme of talks, discussions and lectures, open to all, on matters of faith, history and Catholic social teaching. In maintaining our long and strong connection with Durham University and the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS) we can provide this intellectual stimulation, not readily available elsewhere north of the Tyne, to the Roman Catholic community and beyond.
- Continue to invest in educational events involving high profile, local, regional and national speakers - recent speakers included Eamon Duffy, Austin Ivereigh and Anna Rowlands. Such provision not only stimulates consideration of the faith amongst the parish congregation but also potentially draws interest across other faith groups. It provides a mechanism for others to visit the church and a potential route into Catholicism.

2. Why are we proposing this? (*Link to Mission*)

- To support our growing community and attract others to sharing our Catholic Faith.
- To increase the spiritual, social and educational presence of the Catholic Church within the local and wider community.
- To support the significant number of Catholic children from non-Catholic, state and private schools in Jesmond and the surrounding area.
- To continue to have a vibrant, welcoming community which promotes discussion and understanding.

3. Dependencies: (What will be needed to make this happen? (E.g. people, formation, finances, property decisions, Bishop approval, other parishes co-operating))

- To maintain and increase further our high volunteer numbers, including catechists.
- There is a need for the diocese to provide support and training for volunteers to an appropriate level and standard.
- To maintain contact with the Centre for Catholic Studies and Durham University for lectures and educational activities.
- To continue with secure governance, finances and well-maintained buildings.

4. What will be the outcome if this action cannot happen?

- As the community ages, the presence and influence of the Catholic Church in a key section of Tyneside will decline.
- The loss of future generations through ignorance of the culture, faith and social teaching of the Catholic Church.

Mission: SERVE - Sharing Christ's Love in Action

Reflection and conclusions:

The parish is responsive to a diversity of needs through both financial generosity and the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

The Parish Priest welcomes and encourages ideas and suggestions from church members for charitable activities.

There is a strong ethos of volunteering and supporting others within the parish. Members of the Holy Name collaborate with and have a visible presence in wider community organisations where they support and sustain actions that spread and share the love of Christ.

1. What are we proposing to do? Concrete actions: (*Distinguish what you will do now, next, over a longer journey and who is responsible for leading it*)

- Continue our outreach programme to support ageing and frail members of our community by the Parish Visiting Service.
- Continue parish support in the St Vincent de Paul Centre at Blackfriars, St Anthony's in Walker and the DHN Justice and Peace Refugee Project, both with financial and practical involvement. (Holy Name is extremely supportive through charitable donations as well as having many individual parishioners involved in a wide variety of charitable trusts and institutions as trustees, providers of care, school governors and prison visitors).
- We are conscious of the need to attract and make age-appropriate provision for young worshippers, despite no attached school. We are establishing a dedicated section of the parish website to promote support for St Catherine's Primary School and encourage parish involvement. (Historically, St Catherine's has a connection with the Holy Name Church but lies outside the parish boundary).
- Offer to share our extensive professional and lived skills freely with other parishes across the diocese.

2. Why are we proposing this? (*Link to Mission*)

To further the Kingdom of God and the mission of the Church by witness to Christ's teaching in practical and loving care for the economically and socially challenged throughout the diocese.

3. Dependencies: (*What will be needed to make this happen? (E.g. people, formation, finances, property decisions, Bishop approval, other parishes co-operating)*)

- The generosity of the Holy Name parish, an asset to the diocese and the North East community, to continue.
- We will develop further our large volunteer base.
- The parish Charities Committee to continue to facilitate and provide support for the many charitable activities of members of our congregation. It should continue to oversee the direction and management of donations as advised by the Finance Committee for Holy Name.

4. What will be the outcome if this action cannot happen?

- With the decreased presence and support of the Catholic Church in the region, there will be diminished support and care of the disadvantaged and people will suffer.

Mission: COMMUNITY – Building a Family of Faith

Reflection and conclusions:

A warm welcome is extensively advertised, verbalised and offered to all.

The Holy Name estate is attractive, has age-relevant facilities and accommodates a range of access needs.

The importance of social connectivity is recognised and enabled through spiritual, social and educational activities which enhance a sense of community belonging.

The parish thrives on recognising and encouraging individual gifts and talents to nurture a model of shared responsibility for the wellbeing of the parish community.

1. What are we proposing to do? Concrete actions: (*Distinguish what you will do now, next, over a longer journey and who is responsible for leading it*)

- We will continue to develop our Ministry of Welcome which extends to everyone including non-Catholics, spouses, partners and friends. This openness is reflected in the significant increase in the number of people taking part in spiritual and communal activities.
- We will continue to develop spiritual, social, and cultural activities through our wide variety of groups/clubs and other events to build friendship and inclusivity in the parish.
- We will continue to welcome young families into parish life, beginning with our thriving Children's Liturgy, its active social media community for parents, and the new dedicated space in church for children and their families.
- Responsibilities and activities of parish life are shared by the Parish Priest with the Parish Council and the Finance Committee. This provides ready access to parishioners' ideas and concerns; and contributes to the feeling of welcome and belonging that is fostered in all.
- Maintain our involvement on the board of trustees of the Youth Ministry Trust (YMT) which is specifically aimed at developing the spirituality and faith of teenagers so that they build a lifelong relationship with God.

2. Why are we proposing this? (*Link to Mission*)

To build on an enthusiastic, committed, generous and socially involved community, making the love of Christ real, active and inviting to all.

3. Dependencies: What will be needed to make this happen? (*E.g. people, formation, finances, property decisions, Bishop approval, other parishes co-operating*)

- Further developing the growing, talented and effective volunteer base.
- Increasing our bank of commissioned Lay Leadership.
- Continued efficient management of the governance, finances and property.
- Appointment of future parish priests who recognise, accept and promote the gifts and talents of parish members and shared responsibility for the life of the parish.

4. What will be the outcome if this action cannot happen?

Isolation, loneliness, loss of faith.

Section 3 - Stewardship and Our Common Home (Property)

Accessibility (to be completed by Parish)

Site Name	Building Name	Estimated Occupancy Capacity	Estimated hours of use per week	Estimated number of car parking spaces	Level access into and within the building (Yes/No)	Accessible WC within the building (Yes/No)	% of people travelling by car	Describe local public transport links
Holy Name	Church	270 (320 crush)	10 hours p/w Plus p/a 20 baptisms 4 weddings 20 funerals Also: • Lectures • Concerts	10 on site 30 on-street parking (new arrangements with Council) 20 possible with redesignation of garden lawn =60 in total 3 x designated disabled driver spaces	YES	YES	20%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. City centre to Gosforth 20 minute frequency service 2. 5-10 minute walk to major bus routes to all areas north and east of City 3. 5 minute walk to core Metro line (Airport, Coast, South Shields, Sunderland and Ciy Centre) 4. Active travel options with strategic and other cycle routes to north, east, south and west of church

Site Name	Building Name	Estimated Occupancy Capacity	Estimated hours of use per week	Estimated number of car parking spaces	Level access into and within the building (Yes/No)	Accessible WC within the building (Yes/No)	% of people travelling by car	Describe local public transport links
Holy Name	Hall	60 (seated at tables / concert style) 100 (standing)	30 hours p/w -Laity-led services -Children's liturgy -Sacramental preparation -Meetings -Clubs -Concerts -Exhibitions -Classes -Baptism / Wedding / Funeral parties -Wider community use eg Jesmond Festival -Health services eg vaccinations and CPR training	As church above	YES	YES	35%	As church above

Estimated occupancy capacity – This is simply intended to be a reasonable estimate of the capacity of our churches, halls and meeting spaces. In the future it may be necessary to check these capacity figures against the site Fire Risk Assessment the survey programme for which is currently underway across Diocese.

Existing and potential future uses (to be completed by Parish)

Site Name:	Building Name	Existing uses	Potential future uses
See above			

Section 4: Stewardship Review Discernment

Please use the suggested prompts at **Part F of The Mission Discernment Toolkit** to guide your conversations and complete the following section.

Stewardship: FINANCES

Please summarise your conclusions based on F1. discussions

Holy Name has a turnover of c. £160k p.a. and holds some £200k in uncommitted reserves. It has undertaken major refurbishments and improvements in recent years: external “piazza” (a major community benefit); new lighting; new heating system; a rolling programme of architect designed renovation to Sanctuary and Baptistry; organ / choir loft revitalisation; improvement to fixtures, fittings and decoration.

Stewardship: BUILDINGS

Please summarise your conclusions based on F2. discussions

The church was built in 1929 to a very high standard, with similarly high-quality internal arrangements. A rolling programme of repairs and updating to the building continues year-on-year within our revenue expenditure plans. All buildings are in good repair, but we recognise our need to make the church hall entrance legally compliant.

Stewardship: PEOPLE

Please summarise your conclusions based on F3. discussions and the following questions:

How does your parish benefit from its Parish Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council?

The governance of both committees is of a high standard and fully accessible, inspiring confidence and a sense of trust in church members. Access to and identity of committee members is visibly advertised and contact is encouraged.

Professional expertise, skills and advice from within the congregation are either represented on the committees or readily accessible when needed.

The baptismal vocation of members is recognised, developed and all are encouraged to share fully in the life and management of the parish.

Does your parish have active representation on the Partnership Development Group?

The parish priest and a lay-member sit on the Partnership Development Group.

Are there potential lay leaders in the parish and would they be willing to be trained?

We already have six commissioned Lay Leaders and are looking to increase the number.

Stewardship: SUSTAINABILITY

Please summarise your conclusions based on F4. discussions

What is your assessment on sustaining current mission provision over the next 10 years?

The current state of the parish is very healthy.

We realise that our current leadership with a dedicated Parish Priest is unlikely to prevail throughout the coming decade, but we are taking active steps to:

1. Create an effective lay leadership working alongside the Parish Deacon.
2. Increase further lay / volunteer input
3. Develop the next generation(s) of parishioners to ensure volunteer leadership and delivery.

We have created a strong model of lay leadership with employed administration. This should prevail without a resident priest. We see this as a template for the future in other parishes as well as at Holy Name.

We would be glad to share our experience elsewhere in the diocese on a research and development / proof of concept / exemplary project basis.

The Holy Name in Numbers (March 2026)

Mass attendance over five weeks from mid-March to mid-April 2026	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday average • Sunday average • Average weekend total 	81 251 <u>332</u>
Children's Liturgy (30 families)	56
Streaming (weekday per Mass 78 Mass, Vigil/Sunday 528)	606
Website for March 2026	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors • Views 	2,062 6,832
Volunteering	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of volunteers • Number of roles undertaken • Number of duties undertaken by volunteers • Roles cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Liturgical ○ Educational ○ Pastoral ○ Social and Cultural ○ Governance 	106 35 236
Gift Aid Donors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number at 31/03/2026 (75% Standing Order, 18% DONA) • Increase over past 10 years 	270 170%

Section 5: Snapshot Summary and Parish Conclusions

Please refer to **Part G of The Mission Discernment Toolkit** to guide your conversations and complete the following section. Provide clear, honest, and prayerful conclusions.

What is thriving and must be strengthened?

- The recognition of the Baptismal vocation and gifts and talents of parish members
- Management and responsibility for the life of the parish shared by parish priest with Parish Council and Finance Committee.
- Enthusiastic and dedicated Parish Deacon
- Uplifting celebration of the Liturgy enhanced by the beauty of the surroundings and excellence of the church music.
- Strong sense of community, welcoming to all and providing social contact in a wide range of activities, events and other groups.
- Sacramental and educational programmes to inform and stimulate interest and promotion of the Faith.
- Provision for children and involvement of young families.
- Good, efficient resources management.

What should be adjusted?

- The age profile of volunteers should be recognised and expanded: a succession planning programme will be undertaken.
- We take inspiration from the following advice:
“Nurturing and growing volunteers in a church requires shifting from a “workforce” mentality to a “discipleship” approach, treating volunteers as family members whose gifts are valued rather than just hands to fill a rota. Key strategies include building a culture of appreciation, providing clear expectations, empowering them through training, and making personal invitations.”
- Building volunteering teams to enhance connectivity, personalisation and a sense of shared responsibility.

What drains Mission, is unsustainable, and needs to be released?

- Priests burdened and over-stretched with management obligations.

Where is the Holy Spirit prompting bold steps?

In the absence of a parish priest, consideration should be given to creating a new structure for a lay administrator/manager commissioned by the Bishop.

Many believe that the time has come for the ordination of women and married men.

What are our next steps as a parish?

To continue and develop what is working well.

Holy Name is willing to pilot a new lay management approach and to increase cooperation with local parishes, offering assistance where required.

Proposed Trial of a New Governance Model

Parish Council and Finance Committee combined to become Parish Management Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manages all non-liturgical functions and responsibilities• Operates as a “board”• Becomes responsible for complying with civil legislation and certain aspects of Canon Law• Assists (parish) priest in delivery of liturgy• Releases priest from non-liturgical duties, although he retains a light-touch observation and advisory role
A constitution is developed to enshrine the above	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modification to current Finance Committee regulations• Responsibilities clearly defined• Allocated priest retains reporting / oversight link to Bishop
The Management Committee members are elected from within the Parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Bishop has a right of veto over the appointment of the Chair and Financial Secretary
A Parish Administrator is employed by the diocese and deployed to the parish	This role <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executes the decisions of the PMC and acts as a co-ordination conduit with volunteers• Is a key delivery link with the diocese.

A REMINDER OF NEXT STEPS

Once completed, the parish should **submit this Part H** which is a summary of findings from The Local Mission Discernment (Part E), The Stewardship Review (Part F), and The Parish Snapshot Summary and Conclusions (Part G) to **discernment.returns@diocesehn.org.uk** by **23 April 2026**.