

**REPORT ON HOLY NAME OF MARY CHURCH  
PARISHIONER SURVEY**

**THE HOLY NAME OF MARY CHURCH  
STRATEGIC PLANNING FUTURES COMMITTEE**

**November 2014**



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## **1. Background and Survey Questionnaire Development**

The first Strategic Planning exercise undertaken in the Holy Name of Mary Parish was begun in 2008 and completed in 2009. During the next five years, the work of the Parish Pastoral Council and the Finance Council was based on the results of that planning exercise. In addition, Ministry committees were restructured to align with the implementation plans. In 2013, the Pastoral Council decided that it was time to begin the strategic planning anew. The following steps were taken to form a planning group, determine the methods for assessing the needs of parishioners and directing the work of the Strategic Planning Futures Committee:

1. November 2013 Pastoral Council meeting discussion of Strategic Planning process with presentation by Louise Heslop on the goals and processes for strategic planning, as well as the processes and outcomes of the 2008-9 strategic planning. Through a motion, a unanimous commitment was made to engage in a new Strategic Planning exercise and develop a strategic plan for 2014-2019.
2. A five-member Strategic Planning Futures Committee (SPFC) was formed with Louise Heslop as facilitator. The SPFC team included a representative of the Finance Council and of the C.W.L. and the Knights of Columbus, as well as the Pastoral Council, including the Youth representative.
3. The Chair of the Strategic Planning Futures Committee informed the Parish of the initiative at all Masses
4. A brainstorming session with “Front of Bulletin” ministry leaders and other invited guests was held at HNM School (April 26, 2014, 26 people attending). The Chair of the STFC chaired the meeting. The meeting involved a general review of 2008-9 Strategic Plan and implementation outcomes and an introduction to the goals and process of the day. The work of the meeting then proceeded with discussions about “What are we doing, why, how?” and was guided by 4 questions:
  - i. How have we, as a Parish, done since implementing the first Strategic Plan in 2008-2009?
  - ii. What is it that we are doing well and should continue to do?
  - iii. What is it that we could/should improve?
  - iv. What do we want the Parish to be doing and be 5 years from now?
  - v. A final report of the brainstorming session was prepared by Louise Heslop and results were provided to the SPFC and then to the participants of the session.

Following the brainstorming session, a draft questionnaire was developed by the Facilitator and revised in several rounds from comments received from the Strategic Planning Futures Committee members in two meetings and in several additional SPFC meetings. The questionnaire consisted of four sections:

1. the first section included four questions that asked for opinions on the present situation in the Church, specifically in the areas of:
  - Spiritual Life
  - Social Life
  - Community Work
  - Physical Facilities

Each of these questions included several specific dimensions for rating these areas and space for respondents to write in comments about the topic areas.

2. The second section contained a question structured as the ones in the previous section on specific areas for development in the future and an open-ended question about priorities to be addressed in future planning.
3. The third section contained three questions on areas relevant to future planning. They were open-ended and asked for opinions on these three specific areas -- attracting new parishioners, increasing the involvement of children and youth, and increasing weekly donations. All of these deal with matters of resourcing the future of the Parish.
4. The final section asked for information about the respondent including:
  - current and possible future involvement in the Parish, including self-assessed level of involvement, years in the Parish, Mass attendance frequency
  - current use of donation envelopes and PayPal and what might increase donations
  - information sources use, i.e., bulletins and website
  - demographic information, i.e., gender, age, household composition.

A cover letter distributed with the questionnaire was developed. It was “signed” by the priest and the chair of the Strategic Planning Futures Committee. (See Appendix B for the Cover Letter and Questionnaire.)

Seven hundred copies of the final questionnaire were produced and combined with a cover letter and a return envelope addressed to the Parish Office. Three hundred were distributed in the Church. Three hundred were delivered to Holy Name of Mary School, Almonte and were given to the oldest child in the family in the school to take home. Ninety questionnaires were delivered to Notre Dame High School, Carleton Place, for distribution to children of the Holy Name of Mary, Almonte Parish.

The Parish was informed by the Parish priest between April 6-13 through announcements at Church and in the Bulletin about the beginnings of the strategic planning process and that more information would be forthcoming. More information about the Strategic Planning process and the purpose of the questionnaire was provided to the Parish at the time of the questionnaire distribution by the Chair of the Strategic Planning Futures Committee. The questionnaires were distributed to the Parish following this announcement after the Masses on May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> and subsequent weekends until May 25<sup>th</sup>. Questionnaires were also delivered to the schools. The cover letter specified May 31-June 1 as the final return date, but questionnaires were accepted through the summer. In fact, the final questionnaire was accepted in the early September.

One hundred and twenty-six questionnaires were returned. Of these, two questionnaires were returned to Holy Name of Mary School. None were returned to Notre Dame Catholic High School. Some of those distributed to the schools may have been returned through the Church collection or to the Parish Office. However, it is more likely that almost all of those returned to the Church were collected from the Church distribution process.

## **2. Survey Results**

### **2.1 Response Numbers and Rates**

One hundred and twenty-eight questionnaires were returned from the 690 distributed. Nineteen questionnaires indicated they were completed by multiple respondents. Based on the indicated multiple respondents, the final number of respondents was 156. In addition, the number of children and youth who are in the responding households but did not contribute to the questions responses was 42. In addition, there are undoubtedly many households where one member filled out the questionnaire but other members with shared views did not fill out a separate questionnaire. Therefore, the survey responses likely represent the interests of over 200 parishioners.

The response rate based on returned questionnaires (i.e., 128/690) is 18.5%. However, it is expected that the number of questionnaires which actually reached households is lower than the 690, particularly of the 390 distributed through the schools. It is widely accepted that materials going home in children's backpacks often does not make it to the parental recipients. In addition, due to multiple methods of distributing questionnaires, some questionnaires went to households that already had received one in another way, e.g., some household would have received one or more questionnaires in the Church and also received one from the school but chose not to use all those received. Further, some families may have taken multiple copies home from the Church but filled out only one with more than one respondent on the same questionnaire. The response rate calculated on the 300 distributed at the Church was 43%.

The response rate is quite good by normal survey response rates. The numbers are slightly lower than in the previous survey but still highly credible. The survey involved a broad base of questions covering all aspects of church life and allowing for considerable qualitative, as well as quantitative input. The broad distribution of the questionnaire over a lengthy time period when most people would have been present (i.e., not during summer or winter vacation periods) allowed for all those wishing to provide opinions to do so. Given the scope and the finding reported below the survey appears to have captured major issues of concern to parishioners. More will be said on this issue later. A very high proportion of the questionnaires contained extensive comments, further indicating the engagement of Parishioners with the survey and the strategic planning exercise. Parishioners seem to have absorbed the messaging about the importance of the survey and their input in determining the directions to be taken by Ministry leaders in their work and took this opportunity to provide their opinions about the present situation in the Church and their interests for the Church's development in the future.

### **2.2 Characteristics of Respondents**

The following table presents the general characteristics of the respondents who reported information for the categories. In a few cases, respondents did not answer the questions pertaining to their characteristics, but the number of non-respondents to most questions was low.

However, where large numbers of non-response were noted, this information is provided and is important information as well and especially about the need for communication in the Parish.

Responses to the question of the gender of the respondents for the 85% of respondents who filled out the questionnaire by themselves indicated 26% of the respondents were male and just over 59% were female. The remainder of the questionnaires (15%) indicated a family/ household filled out the questionnaire.

Table 1 presents the age of those who answered. While the question asked respondents to indicate the number in each age category who were involved in answering, respondents frequently only put a tick mark on the line. If respondents only ticked one age category but also indicated the questionnaire was filled out as a family, the minimum assumption of two people in that age category was made. However, this approach would underestimate the total number, explaining, in part, why numbers total below in Table 1 is less than the total respondent numbers indicated above. In a few cases, respondents left all age categories blank. Only 16% of respondents were under thirty years of age; a further 7.5% were 31-45 years of age; one-third were between 46 and 65; and 44% were over 65. Ten percent of respondents were under 18. While this number is quite low, it is an important subset of the children of the Parish. The proportion of respondents who were 65 years of age or older provides a strong basis for analyzing their opinions as a group. About 40% of respondents are in mid-life (31-65 years of age) providing a strong base of parishioners who can be expected to have established life styles with, in many cases, maturing families.

	Frequency	Percent
Under 18	15	10.2
18-30	7	4.8
31-45	11	7.5
46-65	49	33.3
over 65	65	44.2
Missing	9	--
Total	156	100.0

Over sixty-five percent of respondents have been members of the Parish for over 10 years (See Table 2.) The remaining respondents were almost evenly divided between those who had been in the Parish five years or less or 6-10 years with very few being new members. Therefore, the views reported in the survey largely reflect those of long-time parishioners. Some of the issues to be addressed in future planning relate to attracting and retaining newcomers to the community and to the Parish. Therefore, the views of newer parishioners should be examined as to whether or not they differ on matters from those of longer term parishioners in ways that are germane to attracting new members.

**Table 2  
Years in Parish**

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year	3	2.4
1-5 years	21	16.7
6-10 years	20	15.9
More than 10 years	82	65.1
Total	126	100.0
Missing	2	--
Total	128	

Table 3 shows that reported involvement levels of respondents were well distributed, with 28% highly involved and 10% uninvolved. This distribution allows for examining differences in opinion across those more or less knowledgeable and engaged in the community. Differences in responses related to involvement might reflect how much parishioners experience opportunities to know of the needs and possibilities for development of the Parish.

**Table 3  
Level of Involvement**

	Frequency	Percent
Highly Involved	34	28.9
Somewhat Involved	44	36.1
Slightly Involved	32	26.2
Uninvolved	12	9.8
Total	122	100.0
Missing	6	--
Total	128	

Almost all respondents are in regular attendance with only 9.7% reporting less than weekly attendance at services, as seen in Table 4. It would be expected that those in regular attendance would have a greater likelihood of receiving, completing and returning the questionnaire. However, the questionnaire was distributed and announced over several weeks and responses could have been returned using the attached envelope to the Parish Office. The low response levels of those with low attendance may reflect a lack of interest, a feeling that their responses are not valued or that the Parish's future should not be influenced by them, or simply that there are relatively few irregular attendees in the Parish community. Also, there was a notably high proportion of respondents who attended more than once/week. These parishioners are obviously more engaged and interested in the future of the Parish.

Finally, in terms of characteristics of respondents it is important to note that 29 (25%) of questionnaires were from households with children and youth under 20 years of age. Over eighty percent of these had more than one child or youth. As can be seen in Table 5, the total of 57 children/youth in these households are unevenly distributed across the age categories with only a very small number in the oldest, 18 – 20 years of age, and youngest, under 6, categories. While

**Table 4  
Frequency of attending Mass**

	Frequency	Percent
More than once/week	40	32.3
Once/week	72	58.1
1-3 times/month	8	6.5
Less than once/month	4	3.2
Total	124	100.0
Missing	4	
Total	128	

the oldest category could be expected to be small as children leave home at around age 18, the absence of very young children is historically uncharacteristic among Catholics. The largest categories are those with young children and draws attention to the needs of this group among respondents.

**Table 5  
Number of Children/Youth in Households of  
Respondents**

Age	Frequency
under 6	6
6 - 12	27
13 - 17	18
18 - 20	6
Total	57

### **2.3 Overview of All Scale Ratings**

Table 6 presents the means of the 47 scale ratings for the first five questions of the survey in descending order. The first discussion will deal with all these scale items and compare the ratings and rankings of the items to the last survey five years ago. Later sections of the report will present and discuss the results for each of the five areas in more depth.

The first column includes the ranking of scores given by parishioners to the scale items and the second column provides the names of the scale items. The third column includes the number of respondents with a maximum of 128. In fact, no scale item was answered by everyone. Several scale items had response rates below 60%, including weekday Mass times, children's liturgy, adult faith-based education, outreach to elderly and shut-ins, engagement with Notre Dame Catholic High School, programs and activities for children, activities for young families, engagement with St. Declan's, outreach to newcomers, outreach to other groups, and three scales dealing with engagement with and youth programming. As can be seen, most of these deal with specific groups, particularly children and youth and it might be that older

parishioners chose not to respond on these items which do not affect them personally. The other areas often involve outreach activities. Why many respondents would not comment on these is not immediately apparent, but it might reflect lack of knowledge of the outreach activities operating within the Parish. Also, of note is that all of the scale items regarding youth have mean ratings that are quite low.

The fourth column lists the mean ratings of each scale across all respondents. The scales had a range from 1 – very unsatisfied to 5 – very satisfied. The next two columns provide comparison information for the ratings and scale means for the items from the last survey in 2009. This comparison may provide valuable information on what is seen to have been accomplished and where, in particular, parishioners say more needs to be done.

The last two columns are included as a possible aid to interpretation. A commonly used letter grading system is provided in the fourth column with A representing ratings at or above 80% (4 or above/5), B at 70-79% (3.5 – 3.9/5), C at 60-69% (3.0 – 3.49/5), D at 50 – 60% (2.5 – 2.99/5), and F below 50% (under 2.5/5). The fifth column provides commonly used verbal interpretation of these letter grades. The same approach was used in the 2009 survey report. Of course, it may be that parishioners may wish to use different cut-off levels for what would be considered excellent, good, fair and poor and very poor. For example, it may be decided that anything below a B (3.5/5) is poor. This is certainly a matter for interpretation concerning what is acceptable, a strength of the Parish, and a basis for building on versus unacceptable, a weakness, an obstacle to progress, and needing change or development. This is a decision that the Strategic Planning Futures Committee may wish to consider in the early stages of its deliberations about using the survey results for planning purposes.

For purposes of consistency and initial discussions of this report, the rating system provided is used throughout as a starting point. Based on this rating system, seventeen, over one-third, of the 47 scale items were given very high scores suggesting excellent performance. The scale items with highest category rating and their areas are:

Spiritual Life – 9 scale items

- feast day liturgies
- time of weekday Masses
- prayer services
- time of weekend Masses
- opportunities for sacrament of reconciliation
- homilies
- overall spirituality
- children's liturgy

Social Life – 2 scale item

- opportunity to volunteer
- welcoming sense for those attending services
- adult faith-based education

**Table 6**  
**Scale Items Statistics with Comparisons of 2014 and 2009**

2014				2009		2014 Grade	
Rank	Scale item	N	Mean	Mean	Rank		
1	Appearance, condition of Church	123	4.66	4.43	3		Excellent
2	Feast day liturgies	123	4.62	4.34	4		
<b>3</b>	Appearance, condition of rectory	112	<b>4.62</b>	3.73	17		
4	Appearance, upkeep of cemetery	87	4.52	4.61	1	A+	
5	Weekday Masses	71	4.39	(4.22)	(2)		
6	Prayer services	79	4.38	4.34	5		
7	Weekend Masses	120	4.36	(4.22)	(2)		
<b>8</b>	Accessibility for limited mobility	101	<b>4.34</b>	3.73	16		
9	Opportunities for sacrament of reconciliation	108	4.31	3.92	11		
<b>10</b>	Homilies	122	<b>4.30</b>	3.78	15	A	
11	Overall feeling of spirituality	119	4.20	3.83	12		
12	Children's liturgy	47	4.19	4.10	8		
<b>13</b>	Engagement with Holy Name of Mary Catholic School	78	<b>4.18</b>	(3.50)	21		
14	Adult faith-based education	73	4.15	3.83	13		
<b>15</b>	Opportunities to volunteer	109	<b>4.08</b>	3.50	22		
<b>16</b>	Communication to parishioners	112	<b>4.06</b>	4.01	9		
17	Welcoming sense for those attending services	117	4.00	3.61	20	A-	
<b>18</b>	Information from Finance Council	112	<b>3.98</b>	3.34	26		Good
<b>19</b>	Information from Pastoral Council	109	<b>3.93</b>	3.09	29		
<b>20</b>	Organizing, training, recognition of Parish volunteers	99	<b>3.91</b>	3.16	28		
21	Social activities	112	3.89	3.63	19		
22	Outreach for elderly and shut-ins	73	3.89	3.70	18	B+	
23	Overall sense of community in the Parish	115	3.77	3.35	23		
<b>24</b>	Music at Masses	123	<b>3.76</b>	3.92	10		
<b>25</b>	Engagement with Notre Dame Catholic High School	54	<b>3.72</b>	(3.50)	(13)	B	
<b>26</b>	Social justice beyond community	82	<b>3.65</b>	3.78	14		
27	Ability to retain current members	99	3.62	3.34	25		
28	Welcoming sense for newcomers	96	3.60	3.30	27	B-	
<b>29</b>	Programs and activities for children	45	<b>3.49</b>	(2.70)	(42)		Fair
30	Awareness and presence in local community	89	3.47	--	--		
31	Activities for adults of all ages	87	3.38	3.01	34	C+	
32	Information on work of ministry committees	97	3.36	--	--		
<b>33</b>	Involvement of children at services	91	<b>3.34</b>	(2.85)	(39)		
34	Activities for families with young children	45	3.29	2.90	37		
<b>35</b>	Activities for seniors	71	<b>3.23</b>	3.08	30		
<b>36</b>	Outreach to other churches	73	<b>3.22</b>	3.05	31	C	
37	Facilities for families with young children	83	3.19	2.84	40		
38	Engagement with St. Declan's Church	53	3.17	--	--		
<b>39</b>	Ability to attract volunteers	101	<b>3.16</b>	3.04	33		
<b>40</b>	Ability to attract new parishioners	96	<b>3.10</b>	2.98	35		
41	Involvement of youth at services	89	3.06	(2.85)	(39)		
42	Outreach to newcomers	61	3.05	2.70	41		
<b>43</b>	Facilities for social events	103	<b>3.05</b>	2.90	38	C-	
44	Outreach to youth	47	2.87	2.44	45	D+	
45	Programs and activities for youth	42	2.83	(2.70)	(42)	D	
46	Youth-oriented liturgy	37	2.68	2.54	44		
47	Outreach to other groups	48	2.56	2.35	46	D-	
	<b>Mean</b>		3.71	3.30			

Notes: Underlined 2014 ranks (column 1) and means (column 4) indicate rank increases of  $\geq 5$  or mean increases of  $\geq 0.5$ . **Bolded** rankings indicate declines of  $\geq 5$ . In 2014 children and youth items were split into different scales so comparisons with 2009 must be considered with caution. Some ranking numbers are missing in the 2009 list because some items were not included in the 2014 questionnaire.

Physical Facilities – 4 scale items

- appearance and condition of the Church
- appearance and condition of the rectory
- appearance and upkeep of the cemetery
- accessibility for those with limited mobility

Community work – 1 scale item

- engagement with Holy Name of Mary Catholic School

Parish Development – 1 scale item

- communications and information to parishioners.

Eleven scale items received mean scores in the B or Good range. These scale items and their areas are:

Spiritual Life – 1 scale items (down from 5 but the remaining 4 improved in rating)

- music

Social Life – 4 scale items

- organizing, training, recognition of volunteers
- social activities
- overall sense of community in the Parish
- welcoming sense for newcomers

Community work – 3 scale items

- outreach to elderly and shut-ins
- engagement with Notre Dame Catholic High School
- social justice activities

Parish Development – 3 scale items

- information from Finance Council
- information from Pastoral Council
- ability to retain current members of the Parish.

Fifteen scale items were rated C or fair with only two at the C+ level. Those that received a fair rating are:

Spiritual Life – 2 scale items

- involvement of children at services
- involvement of youth at services

Social Life – 4 scale items

- programs and activities for children
- activities for adults of all ages
- activities for families with young children
- activities for seniors

Physical Facilities – 2 scale items

- facilities for families with young children
- facilities for social events

Community work – 4 scale items

- awareness and engagement in local community
- outreach to other churches
- engagement with St. Declan's Church

- outreach to newcomers
- Parish Development – 3 scale items
- information on work of ministry committees
  - ability to attract volunteers
  - ability to attract new parishioners.

Only four scale items received ratings classified with a grade of D or poor. No Physical Facilities or Parish Development scales were rated at this level or below. These four are:

Spiritual Life – 1 scale item

- youth-oriented liturgy

Social Life – 1 scale item

- programs and activities for children and youth

Community Work – 2 scale items

- outreach to youth
- outreach to other groups.

In summary, most of the highly rated scale items were in the areas of the Spiritual Life and Physical Facilities. The scale items with Good ratings were mainly divided across the areas of Social and Community Life and Future Parish Development. The scale items falling in the Fair range were divided across all areas. All but one of the items receiving a Poor rating dealt with youth.

In comparison with the 2009 ratings, the overall mean is higher; far more items received higher grade scores; no items received what would be classed as an F-failing grade, whereas the previous survey found two community work items with scores below 2.5. The items experiencing the greatest increases in absolute rating (increasing at least 0.5) and/or comparative positioning (rising at least 5 rank positions) were:

- Social Life (2 items - volunteerism including opportunities to, as well as, organizing, training and recognition);
- Spirituality (2 items – homilies and involvement of children at services);
- Physical Facilities (2 items – rectory and accessibility);
- Parish Development (2 items - information from both the Finance and Pastoral Councils); and
- Community Work (1 item - engagement with HNM School).

Overall, these findings suggest the implementation of the previous strategic plan has enhanced all aspects of the parish along directions that were very important and welcome by parishioners. Two other areas in each of Spirituality (opportunity for reconciliation and overall sense of spirituality), Social Life (welcoming sense at services and overall sense of community), and involving young children (activities for young children and facilities for families with young children) increased in scale score by about 0.4. The work during the last 5 years has clearly focussed on what parishioners asked for and was successfully carried out on many of the key issues. What is next or remains to be done appears in the form of those items with major ratings declines and items scoring at the bottom of the list.

Essentially, there were no scale items that parishioners reported absolute declines in ratings of any appreciable size (three had absolute values below 2009 levels but the differences were < 0.15 and not significant). However, there were several with notable ranking declines of 5 or more positions, suggesting these are issues rising in prominence for direct action. These nine scale items were spread out across all categories and are communication to Parishioners, music at Masses, engagement with Notre Dame Catholic High School, engagement beyond the community, activities for seniors, outreach to other churches, ability to attract new parishioners and volunteers, and facilities for social events.

Each of the next four sections examines the subsets of scale items individually and also presents results of further analysis based on the characteristics of respondents. However, as an overview it is noted here that the ratings showed little variance related to respondent characteristics, including gender, age, years in the Parish, or involvement level in the Parish. This finding provides a strong basis for a united approach to future planning to build on the strengths and improve areas needing development.

## **2.4 Current Situation in the Parish**

### **2.4.1 Spiritual Life**

Table 7 presents the results of the Spiritual Life rated items with item names in the first column, respondent numbers in the second, mean rating in the third and grade scoring in the last two columns. Those underlined are higher by at least 0.4 than in the 2009 survey. As can be seen, all Spiritual Life scale items were given excellent or good ratings except for three dealing with children and youth. There is one item about children which is highly rated and that is the children's liturgy. This refers to the organized children's activities at the Sunday morning Masses which has been in existence for many years with highly dedicated and effective volunteers who direct the spiritual development of young children during the pre-Consecration time of the Mass. This service receives excellent ratings. Otherwise, there is a clearly stated dissatisfaction with opportunities for youth to receive special attention in the Spiritual Life of the Parish.

Statistical analysis found very few significant differences in the ratings based on gender, age (under 65 vs. 65+), presence of children in the household, number of years in the Parish or involvement level (high and moderate vs. slight and low level). Women gave higher ratings to adult faith-based education. Older parishioners were less satisfied with the involvement of both children and youth at services. Families with children at home rated opportunity for reconciliation lower but involvement of children and the homilies higher. Those with higher levels of involvement were also more positive about the homilies.

**Table 7**  
**Means for Spirituality Scale items (in descending order)**

Scale item	N	Mean	Grade	
Feast day liturgies	123	4.62	A+	Excellent
Weekday Masses	159	4.34		
Prayer services	118	4.34		
Weekend Masses	135	4.26		
Opportunities for sacrament of reconciliation	108	4.31		
Homilies	122	4.30	A	
Overall feeling of spirituality	119	4.20		
Children's liturgy	47	4.19		
Adult faith-based education	73	4.15	A-	
Music at Masses	123	3.76	B	
Involvement of children at services	91	3.34	C	Fair
Involvement of youth at services	89	3.06	C-	
Youth-oriented liturgy	37	2.68	D	Poor

Respondents were given the opportunity to include written comments and a large number were received. (See more detail on the summation of comments received for all questions in Appendix 3) The overwhelming majority of these comments were about the desire that the Parish better address the needs of children and youth through specific services oriented to and run by them. There were several requests for Masses with a specific focus, e.g., Healing Mass. A few complained about the noise in church before and after Mass which can make it hard to pray. To a certain extent, an increase in conviviality and a welcoming sense of community may exacerbate this problem. In a welcoming atmosphere, there is going to be more chatting. While there are doors which separate the vestibule of the church, they are rarely closed. Closing them would contain some of the noise before Mass but is not a solution after Mass. Perhaps solving this problem has its downside. A few comments were made related to the time of Mass, but the numbers supporting each alternative expressed were very small.

Comments about the music at Masses were also numerous and highly varied, likely reflecting differences in musical tastes but strong interest and appreciation of music at the Masses. Several requests were made that could improve participation, including, a singing leader. While some asked for more contemporary music, several were critical of this style and preferred more traditional hymns. There were several comments regarding the need for music choices more attuned to the Mass theme and elements e.g., quieter and more reflective during Communion. Several suggested a wider variety of options for music, including soloists, stringed instruments (e.g., violin), organists, and a children's choir. A few voiced concerns about the use of certain instruments during Mass.

There were also many suggestions for additional aspects of Spiritual Life. These suggestions were highly varied and reflect a strong interest in more opportunities outside of Mass to engage in spiritual life enhancing opportunities. Examples of these suggestions were Parish missions, retreats, guest speakers, seminars, more Bible studies, Rosary, prayer groups, etc. The current Pastor was praised by several for his leadership in promoting spiritual activities.

A few people also had comments about their concerns with what were judged as non-traditional Communion observances and advocated strongly for a return to the practice of the use of the altar rail, communion only on the tongue and distribution only by the priest.

### 2.4.2 Social Life

As seen in Table 8, ratings of items concerning the social life of the Parish ranged from Excellent to Fair, which quite a bit better from the 2009 survey where these items rated Good to Poor with most in the Fair range. Overall sense of community in the parish was rated as excellent, coming up from below the mid-point of the scale in 2009. Volunteerism in the Parish was considered to be excellent and activities to organize, train and appreciate volunteers were rated as good. Welcoming of newcomers was also rated as Good, which is an improvement over the 2009 survey. While there was some improvement also in activities for different ages from children to seniors, the ratings were only fair for this group of five scale items, suggesting more could be done to build the HNM Church community.

Statistical analysis of these scale items found no differences across respondents of different gender and level of involvement. Seniors gave lower scores for activities aimed at them. Families with young children were more positive about activities for them. Those who have been members of the Parish for ten years or less rated the welcoming sense at services lower than longer term parishioners, suggesting there still is a ways to go for the Parish to help newer parishioners feel they are a part of the community.

**Table 8**  
**Means for Social Life Scale items (in descending order)**

Scale item	N	Mean	Grade	
Opportunities to volunteer	109	4.08	A-	Excellent
Welcoming sense for those attending services	117	4.00		
Organizing, training, recognition of Parish volunteers	99	3.91	B+	Good
Social activities	112	3.89		
Overall sense of community in the Parish	115	3.77	B	
Welcoming sense for newcomers	96	3.60	B-	
Programs and activities for children	45	3.49	C+	Fair
Activities for adults of all ages	87	3.38		
Activities for families with young children	45	3.29	C	
Activities for seniors	71	3.23		
Programs and activities for youth	42	2.83	C-	

Comments written in on this question were more numerous than for any other area and were highly varied. (See Appendix C for more detail.) This, in itself, fosters the position that parishioners are anxious to see more community spirit and an active social life that builds connections. The centrality of this area in the comments also highlights the importance of a good Church social life to sustaining the spiritual life of the Parish. The most common topic involved issues related to having a place to gather on-site, improving the welcoming at Mass, general community feeling and welcoming of newcomers, attracting and supporting volunteers, and more social activities, especially for youth. Suggestions included greeting others before and

after Mass, smiling, introducing newcomers at the beginning of Mass, initiating the practice of turning to a neighbour and introducing oneself, more greeters, name tags at select services. There were several suggestions for attracting newcomers through connections with the Welcome Wagon service and publishing the names of newcomers in the bulletin, providing them with information packages, and connecting them with others through a formally organized process in the Parish.

There were many ideas for social activities. Parishioners talked about wanting more and more kinds of activities, such as, potlucks, picnics, game and movie nights, and more family activities. Youth activities were also suggested (dances, games for children and youth) and activities for seniors. In contrast to the 2009 survey, there were many more comments about the need for facilities within the Parish for these activities, such as a gathering place or small hall.

The need for more volunteers was another area which received several comments. Organizing social events requires a lot of time and effort, as well as leadership from the Social Life Ministry.

### **2.4.3 Community Outreach**

Table 9 reports on the ten Community Work scale items which received ratings in the Excellent to Poor range, which is an improvement over the 2009 survey where no excellent ratings were received and there were some ratings in the Very Poor range. Again, the lower end includes the item related to youth outreach and other groups. At the top of the list is Engagement with HNM School. Considerable improvement in the church-school relationship has been realized through the strong efforts of the Pastoral Council leaders and the school Principal. Fair ratings were given to outreach to other churches, our own affiliated church of St. Declan's, and outreach to newcomers. Therefore, while progress has been made, there are messages here about challenges that can help the Parish meet its obligations to engage with others to be better known and to attract and support others.

A few statistical differences were noted in this area. Families with children and youth in the household are looking ahead and are less satisfied with the current level of engagement with Notre Dame CHS, outreach to youth, and awareness of the Church in the community. Perhaps more surprising is the lower rating given by this group to outreach to the elderly and shut-ins. Parents in these full-nest stage of life households may find themselves part of the "Sandwich Generation" who are doubly busy with both children and aging parents. Women were more satisfied than men with outreach to other churches. Those in the Parish more than ten years feel that outreach to newcomers is better than those who are newer to the Parish. It appears that the giver and receiver see things differently here. There were no differences in ratings of the scales across age groupings or by level of involvement in the Parish.

Many written comments were received on this section as can be seen in Appendix C. The largest number of comments involved the need for engagement and activities for youth. While the needs of children have been the focus of much effort by volunteers in the last five years, there has been much less success in the case of those over 12 years of age. Also, outreach to newcomers received more suggestions for improvement. Many had ideas concerning the need for new volunteers and the support of volunteers. There is some concern that current volunteers

**Table 9**  
**Means for Community Work Scale items (in descending order)**

Scale item	N	Mean	Grade	
Engagement with HNM Catholic School	78	4.18	<b>A</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Outreach for elderly and shut-ins	73	3.89	<b>B+</b>	<b>Good</b>
Engagement with Notre Dame Catholic High School	54	3.72	<b>B</b>	
Social justice beyond community	82	3.65	<b>B-</b>	
Awareness and engagement of Church in local community	89	3.47	<b>C+</b>	<b>Fair</b>
Outreach to other churches	73	3.22	<b>C</b>	
Engagement with St. Declan's	53	3.17		
Outreach to newcomers	61	3.05	<b>C</b>	
Outreach to youth	47	2.87	<b>D+</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Outreach to other groups	48	2.56	<b>D-</b>	

have little backup or plans for succession in the many tasks they perform. An interest in more social activities with other churches received several mentions. Many comments were also made about interest in inter-faith activities and working with members of other congregations in the town. Regarding social justice activities beyond the community, there were some specific suggestions and several remarked on shifting away from Development and Peace as a lead organization in outreach to the needs in less developed countries. Several suggestions were given to improve communications about the outreach activities, and the high number of non-responses on these scales may relate to the lack of awareness of the good work being done in this Ministry area.

#### **2.4.4 Physical Facilities**

The 2014 questionnaire included fewer scale items dealing with Physical Facilities due to the completion in the last five years of several major projects, including the installation of washrooms, a new sound system, ongoing upgrades in carpeting and windows, and major renovations the rectory. However, the condition of the rectory was left on the questionnaire even though the working area offices and entrance to the offices, as well as work on the porch and grounds have been completed. Some concern emerged at the Brainstorming session that informed the questionnaire regarding the condition of the living areas of the house.

Response rates in this category were particularly high for all but two items, the cemetery and facilities for families with young children. Four of the six aspects of the Physical Facilities section of the questionnaire received the highest scale ratings, including the Church, the Rectory, the cemetery, and the accessibility of the Church to those with mobility limitations. (See Table 10 for details.) However, the remaining two areas of facilities for social events and for families with young children were given ratings in the C- range, just above Poor. This information can be used to inform the Property Committee concerning possible new initiatives. The information is particularly useful, given the level of respondent participation on these topics.

Those with greater involvement in the Church gave statistically significantly lower ratings to several facilities, including the rectory, the cemetery, facilities for social events and for

families with young children, and accessibility. These respondents are the heaviest users of the Parish and are experiencing the facility limitations the most. In contrast, those who have been Parishioners the longest were happier than those with less tenure in the condition of the Church, the rectory, and the cemetery. These findings suggest that the work of the Finance Council and its Property Committee over the last five years has been well received. However, those who are more involved in the Church have identified issues that still need addressing, including the living area of the rectory and facilities to support a more active and engaged Catholic community. In addition, families with children and youth in the household were significantly less favourably disposed to many of the physical facilities, including facilities for social events and for their families, accessibility for those with limited mobility, and the rectory.

**Table 10**  
**Means for Physical Facilities Scale items (in descending order)**

Scale item	N	Mean	Grade	
Appearance, condition of Church	123	4.66	A+	Excellent
Appearance, condition of rectory	112	4.62		
Appearance, upkeep of cemetery	87	4.52	A	
Accessibility for limited mobility	101	4.34		
Facilities for families with young children	83	3.19	C-	Fair
Facilities for social events	103	3.05		

An examination of the distribution of ratings across the various scale levels on the two lowest items as shown in Tables 11 and 12 reveals that, regarding facilities for social events, the distribution is a relatively flat curve. About equal numbers are somewhat to highly satisfied and somewhat to very unsatisfied, and about a third gave the middle rating. Depending on how one looks at it, about two-thirds of respondents are not satisfied or conversely, about two-thirds are satisfied. It may be that more information is needed to build a consensus before moving forward with changes and investments in these facilities. In the same way but with slightly more skew to the positive, the frequencies on facilities for young children are also fairly evenly spread across the scale.

**Table 11**  
**Facilities for Social Events**

	Frequency	Percent
Very Unsatisfied	19	18.6
2	15	14.7
3	32	31.4
4	15	14.7
Very Satisfied	21	20.6
Total	102	100.0
Missing	24	
Total	126	

**Table 12  
Facilities for Families with Young Children**

	Frequency	Percent
Very Unsatisfied	8	9.9
2	17	20.7
3	24	28.0
4	17	20.7
Very Satisfied	16	19.5
Total	82	100.0
Missing	44	
Total	126	

There were many comments written by respondents in this section. Although there was no scale item about a Parish gathering place/social events facility/hall, the majority of comments were about this topic. The supporting comments were largely based on the value of such a facility in promoting community-building and outreach-related activities, while the few dissenting comments mainly noted costs of building and maintaining it. A few comments were ambivalent, giving both positive and negative reasons for a Parish-owned space. Some other comments about the current need for the Parish to find and use facilities all around Almonte for functions might also be considered as concerned with this issue. Comments on both sides of the issue were often strongly worded. The scale-rated item most closely associated with this issue is the one concerning Facilities for Social Activities. The mean of this scale is at the bottom of the Fair range, but as noted in Table 11 above, opinions are widely spread.

## **2.5 The Way Ahead - Future Areas for Development**

### **2.5.1 General Areas Related to Development**

The final set of rating scales were about areas which deal with aspects that are foundational to development of directions, including communication flows, attracting new members and volunteers and retaining current members, as seen in Table 13. The only item receiving an excellent rating was about general communication through the Parish bulletin and through the website, although only about 21% reported visiting it at least monthly.

Three scales appeared in the Fair rating category, and they were the ability to attract new parishioners and attract volunteers and information about committee work of the Ministries. The first two were in the 2009 survey and their means have risen, suggesting some improvement. However, with the current high proportion of elderly parishioners, the ability to attract new parishioners, especially those moving into the community and young families is key to the ability to continue the mission of the Parish and to provide the time and money to fund the Church facilities. Therefore, these lower ratings may be particularly troublesome as a limitation to a healthy future. The new item in the 2014 survey in this area is the one on information on

ministry committee work. As will be noted in the next section, communication from Finance and Pastoral Councils is seen as strong. However, other ministries may be doing a lot of good work, but parishioners feel they are not hearing enough about these accomplishments. Some suggestions for improving this situation include reworking the bulletin to contain periodic reports from the ministry leaders and website drop down menus that would allow for highlighting their work. This increase in communication might also aid in attracting new volunteers to share the load.

Statistical analysis comparing different groups of respondents revealed that women were happier than men and long-term parishioners were happier than those with fewer years in the Parish with communication to parishioners.

**Table 13**  
**Means for Parish Development Scale Ratings (in descending order)**

Scale item	N	Mean	Grade	
Communication to parishioners	112	4.06	A-	Excellent
Information from Finance Council	112	3.98	B+	
Information from Pastoral Council	109	3.93	B-	Good
Ability to retain current members	99	3.62	C+	
Information on work of ministry committees	97	3.36	C-	Fair
Ability to attract volunteers	101	3.16		
Ability to attract new parishioners	96	3.10		

### 2.5.2 Priorities for Development

Four open-ended questions dealt with aspects of future development for the Parish – what the priorities should be for the next few years, how to attract families, how to increase the involvement of children and youth, and what might increase weekly giving. Appendix C

includes tables summarizing these responses. For ease of discussion here, the comment topics of three or more respondents are included below in Tables 14-18.

The greatest number of comments dealt with the needs of families and children in the Parish (See Table 14). The second largest concerned youth involvement and activities. The third largest number of comments was about a gathering place for social activities and meetings. The

next most frequently mentioned priorities were about the need for more community outreach within our own community and beyond. There was a cluster of responses around improving the sense of community within the Church and how this would help retain and attract families to the Parish. The answers reflect all areas of the Parish life. These comments can directly inform ministry leaders about what parishioners want to see happen in the near future.

**Table 14**  
**Q. 6 Priorities**

<b>Comment Topic</b>	<b>Number</b>
Families & children	20
More youth involvement, activities	18
Church gathering place, space for activities and meetings	11
Community outreach	11
Involve children in Mass	6
Maintaining current members/building stronger congregation / attract new members	5
More welcoming	5
Build relationship with schools	4
Target individual groups	4
Learning / education programs	4
Community spirit	3
Communication increased	3
Spiritual life	3
Reverence for communion (real presence), perpetual adoration	3
Maintain buildings / improve / cleaning / parking lot	3

### **2.5.3 Attracting Members**

The priority of keeping current parishioners and attracting new members is further dealt with in the question about attracting new families (Table 15). The comments offered by many respondents dealt with a concerted, organized approach to developing means to communicate the presence of the Church and the welcoming of new members. This could involve being pro-active in communicating with people in the schools and as they come to the community. Also, there is an interest in having more social activities for all and for youth. Children and youth activities are also included here in the comments on involving the schools more and having youth and family Masses and activities.

The final question in this section of the questionnaire solicited ideas for attracting children and youth to weekly Mass. The overwhelming number of suggestions seen in Table 16 dealt with involving schools and engaging children and youth in the Mass and particularly having a regular Youth Mass with music that they relate to and would participate in. The schools were seen as highly important in this effort. Parishioners believe the school and their teachers can do more to stress the importance of Mass and lead by example. There were also many suggestions that pointed out the need for direction for the children from parents.

**Table 15**  
**Q. 7 - Attracting Families**

<b>Comment Topic</b>	<b>Number</b>
Involve schools, get lists from schools / priest more active	12
Visible presence at outreach community events	8
Welcome people, hospitality, Welcome Wagon	8
Work with real estate groups & contact new families to area, new neighbour packages	7
Youth activities, including drama club; 4:30 Youth Mass – make it attractive	7
Social events for whole family	6
Articles in paper, Millstone, Humm, e.g., festive, family events	6
Social events after Mass	5
Website	3
Rework music program (especially 10:30)	3
Be less 'clique-ish'	3

**Table 16**  
**Q. 8 - Increasing Attendance of Children and Youth at Mass**

<b>Comment Topic</b>	<b>Number</b>
Involve children in Mass / special Mass for youth, including older youth	18
Strengthen connections with schools; Guest speakers go to schools & stress importance of Mass; teachers attend; make it part of religion class	14
Encourage and educate parents; their responsibility	13
Music that relates to youth / youth band & choir	6

### **2.5.4 Weekly Giving**

The issue of weekly giving was addressed by four-part question probing three aspects of this issue – use of weekly envelopes, use of PayPal, and motivators for increased financial support of the Church. Eighty-eight percent of respondents reported regular use of weekly donation envelopes. About twenty-four percent use PayPal. Thus, some parishioners use both donation means, e.g., they may set up a regular PayPal donation and use envelopes for special collections.

There were many suggestions in response to a general question about how to increase the income of the Parish, as can be seen in Table 17. The largest number of comments suggested the most successful approach would be to provide more information that would explain the financial position of the Parish and how the different funds worked and providing direct suggestions for giving. There is some confusion concerning recent changes in funds and taxation by the Diocese. There were many other suggestions for fundraising activities. General appeals and the setting of specific goals for giving were the most frequent suggestions. Several comments in earlier sections did mention the interest in having regular financial and donation information in

the bulletin. A few noted the connection between increasing weekly giving and the number of parishioners, i.e., more members would increase total revenue.

The survey also posed a more personal directed question concerning what might motivate the respondent him/herself to give higher donations. Fourteen percent indicated there were things that would motivate larger donations. A space was provided to indicate what such a motivator would be. Examples of answers included the provision of more information about financial needs and donation levels, goals for fundraising, direct appeals (e.g., ‘just ask’, ‘tell us what you need’), and improved long-term planning. There is a strong interest for more information from Finance Council to help parishioners realize what the situation is, and what funds are needed for, guidelines for appropriate giving levels.

**Table 17**  
**Q. 9 Increasing Weekly Giving**

Comment Topic	Number
More info from Finance Council, oral reports, full monthly disclosure of income/expenses including diocese, explain Memorial Fund, justify expenses/ detail on amount in envelopes	12
Suggest amount for donations / just say it/ put need in simple form	11
Encourage PayPal; automatic debit	8
Set specific goals, e.g., monthly	4
Make people more welcome and so willing to attend / attendance will solve financial woes	4
Tithing	3
Money raising events - bingos / raffles / Church supper / dance / draws / bake sales / garage sales / barbecues/ 50-50/sponsor a pew charge	3

### **2.5.5 Volunteerism**

Another important resource need for a Parish is volunteers. Involvement levels are reported earlier in the survey in Table 3. Twenty- eight percent of respondents reported they are highly involved already but roughly one-third were slightly or uninvolved.

The survey asked what would increase personal involvement. Most of the answers indicated a lack of time or the inability to be involved due to declining health or advanced age. Many indicated they would like to be more involved if they were not working and hoped to increase involvement in retirement.

The responses suggest a base of untapped resources for the Parish that creative efforts might draw out, organize and build on. However, overburdening already busy people might not accomplish much. Rather, spreading the work load, respecting existing commitments, and targeting requests for engagement to the interests and talents of parishioners will be necessary to planning of volunteer recruitment, training, use, and recognition. More is said elsewhere since this area is linked to perceived ministry communication shortfalls.

### **3. Summary and Conclusions**

#### **3.1 Alignment of the Survey Results and the Ministry Leader Session**

The survey was undertaken following a focussed brainstorming session with ministry leaders. A comparison of the results of the two exercises can be instructive. Details of that brainstorming session are included in Appendix A. Since there are no numbers associated with this exercise, no direct statistical comparison is possible, but the general nature of the assessments of the present situation of the Parish and priorities for development can be compared.

##### **3.1.1 Spiritual Life**

There would appear to be general agreement between ministry leaders and the survey respondents on the strength of spiritual life of the Parish, especially around faith-based education, the children's liturgy, special liturgies, and the spirituality of the priest. However, the needs of older children and youth have yet to be addressed, and it is a high priority item for both the ministry leaders and parishioners. Survey responses regarding the music were less in alignment with the ministry leaders with a wider range of personal tastes and preferences reflected in the comments of parishioners on the survey.

In delineating desired improvements and changes, the ministry leaders noted several areas where spiritual life of the Parish could be enhanced. Many of these were in alignment with the survey results. These included youth-oriented liturgy and reconciliation services. In this area the ministry leaders also called for increased inclusiveness in the services, i.e., they thought it was a strength but there was room for improvement. This opinion aligned more with the survey findings. The ministry leaders also proposed more support for lapsed Catholics. This topic would reflect similar views to the congregation's responses on outreach to other groups. Therefore, there is a similarity in views about the importance of initiatives to re-connect those who might benefit from a proactive approach by the Church. There was a fervour among several of the ministry leaders for more "aliveness" in the Church through the Holy Spirit. This opinion is echoed in some of the comments of survey respondents to make the church more inspirational and active in its faith expression and that such an approach would be a source of attraction for children and youth. Both the survey and the brainstorming session expressed interest in additional devotional programs. However, while a few parishioners expressed grave concern about non-traditional forms of receiving Communion (i.e., in the hand and not kneeling at the altar rail), this issue did not arise among ministry leaders.

##### **3.1.2 Social Life and Community Outreach**

A major shift in this survey from the 2009 results is in the perceptions of the social life of the church and its welcoming sense. Scores on this issue have improved. However, there are still areas of concern and work to be done. Ministry leaders see the Parish heading in the right direction and survey respondents agreed. However, those who have been in the Parish for a shorter period of time still are noting some difficulty in engaging with others. There were many suggestions for improving in this area that should be implemented to try to "shake things up"

some more. While Ministry leaders feel they are well informed about what is going on, there is more that can be done to improve cross-ministry co-ordination and much more in communicating with parishioners. While survey respondents feel that communication from Finance and Pastoral Councils is very good, they are not so positive about what they hear from the other ministries. There were several suggestions for ways to improve, including regular reporting in the bulletin and the website. These ministries are doing much good work, but parishioners may be more supportive and even volunteer if they heard more about the work.

Both groups strongly supported additional outreach activities, particularly, as noted in the previous section, especially to newcomers and youth and to groups seldom served, including lapsed Catholics and singles. There was a call in both the survey and the ministry session for youth activities, greater involvement with the schools, and engaging newcomers into the Parish. Finally, the ministry leaders and the survey results indicate improvements since 2009 in but still a need for better organizing, training and recognition of volunteers.

### **3.1.3 Physical Facilities**

Both groups were in strong agreement about the strengths and weaknesses of the Parish physical facilities. The Church and its recent renovations were a decided strength for both groups. Both also cited the cemetery as a strength of the Parish. However, facilities for families with young children and for social gatherings is now identified by both ministry leaders and many parishioners, especially those with greater involvement, as a major concern that needs to be addressed. As noted above, this topic area received the most comments on the survey, with most emphasizing the strong need for better facilities. However, a few parishioners still do not want such a new facility. This dichotomy of opinion appears to be less pronounced both among parishioners than in 2009 and among ministry leaders, but there may still be significant opposition to advancing an on-site gathering space. This finding suggests the need for significant further study and a phased approach to advancing ideas and soliciting opinions frequently to determine how to achieve a reasonable consensus. However, it would appear that “doing nothing” is not a suitable option.

### **3.1.4 Future Development**

While the spiritual life of the Parish is considered to have a strong base, ministry leaders were very enthusiastic about the need for a greater intensity of development. They strongly felt that spirituality is the key to growth and development and the accomplishment of all the goals of the Parish. Invigorated spirituality would enliven Parish life, attract new members, inspire youth and attract volunteers and donations.

Both the survey results and the ministry leaders’ session proposed considerably more community outreach activities. Such work requires a great deal of human energy and time. Ministry leaders noted this and called for greater resourcing of such efforts, especially the need to attract and train new volunteers. However, the importance of these activities for building a vibrant, inclusive community and also as central to the mission of the Church is a strongly held belief.

### 3.2 Conclusion

The survey results represent a wealth of information and opinions for assessing current strengths and challenges for the Parish and priorities of the Parish for moving ahead. The survey was responded to with enthusiasm, care and insight by a good proportion of the members of the Parish. The written comments were very extensive, and several questionnaires had pages attached for additional input on opinions or media articles to illustrate good practice in other churches. While respondents represent a broad base of the community, they are also likely to be disproportionately those who are committed and involved. They are clearly and strongly interested in the future of the Parish and its sustainability. However, it would also appear that they have many ideas and expectations about future development and change. They appear in their ratings to recognize the value of what was accomplished in the last 5 years and arising out of their input to the last survey. Their ideas are many; their requests for action are numerous; and their engagement in the process and implementation of these changes and development is critical to success. Parishioners are very positive about the changes that have been made and the greater organization of the ministries. However, they also want more, particularly around welcoming attitudes within the Church to boost attendance and programming for older children and youth, which has not been implemented. There are many people to congratulate for the accomplishments of the last five years, but some tough tasks re youth and welcoming and outreach lie ahead. To tackle these areas, new volunteers will be needed.

The ministry leaders brainstorming session was also enthusiastic and informed by deep involvement in the change that has come about and the growth of community spirit, improvement in physical facilities, increased spirituality and engagement of young children. They also want more to happen and recognize that the things that have been accomplished lead naturally to what more can be done. Their knowledge and dedication to service in the Parish is very high and central to continuing vibrancy in the Church.

The survey results and the ministry leaders generally are in strong agreement about most matters. The ministry leaders are very active and involved in the Church and, as such, are more likely to run up against the needs and limitations of the Parish and can identify more directly these needs and barriers to progress. They also appear to have more fervour for and desire to build the spiritual life in the Parish. The growth in many aspects of the spiritual life of the Parish is seen to be a solid foundation for outreach activities and for attracting new members, including youth. In general, the ministry leaders see that the first strategic planning initiative and the drive put behind its implementation have yielded tremendously positive results.

It is important to note that the strong congruence of the survey results with the views of the ministry leaders indicates they are well positioned to lead the strategic planning process for the Parish and to begin its implementation. This implementation should easily attract the support and involvement of other parishioners and such increased and wider volunteerism will be needed to attain the desired future of the Parish members. They also feel empowered by the mandate derived from the survey process and the strategic plan development. In addition, the formal approach to planning, budgeting, communication across committees and to parishioners is viewed very positively. However, they also note areas for continued growth and for improvement in organization and communication, including youth programming, social

activities, communication among volunteers, volunteer education, and reporting to parishioners. The ministry leaders feel that additional formal practices of setting concrete targets as benchmarks for progress tracking and visiting other parishes to learn ‘best practice’ should be implemented.

One of the strongest themes that emerged in all the areas of the survey and the ministry leaders’ session revolved around children and youth, but most particularly the latter group. There is recognition of the huge strides in engaging the children who come to Church in the liturgy, particularly around the Family Mass and special feast day celebrations. However, the absence of many children is still a source of concern. . Greater engagement of parents and schools was called for. There was agreement on all fronts concerning the inadequacy of services and programs designed to attract and meet the needs of youth, including liturgy services, social activities, and family-oriented activities. Some tentative steps through the establishment of a youth group are noted but so far, this effort has struggled with impediments to growth. Leaders and parishioners both see this area as a crucial imperative to address in the coming years.

One of the most controversial areas seen in the survey in 2009 concerned physical facilities for social activities. While opinions were more divided then, in the 2014 survey there is a stronger call for some kind of “gathering place” for children and youth activities, for small social activities among parishioners, and for meetings. Some are still opposed to a new facility. However, the numbers seen in the survey opposed to it are small compared to those who are supportive of such an initiative. Much discussion, information, fact-finding and planning is needed so that parishioners can make an informed decision.

Resourcing of the future development of the Parish will require careful planning. The fiscal health of the Parish is a basic requirement. However, the attraction of volunteers is equally important to bringing the desired future into being.

### **3.3 Next Steps**

The survey report was received and accepted by the Strategic Planning Futures Committee at its meeting on November 12. A short summary of the report for circulation to parishioners was developed. The full report will be made available for those wishing to read it.

The next steps are to develop a Strategic Plan based on a firm understanding of where the Parish is and where parishioners wish to go. The ministry leaders group will be re-engaged in this planning exercise. While there is much work to do, the survey forms an excellent base for knowing directions for planning. Also, it is recommended that the planning group engage in a “best practices” exercise to gather information from other churches in the diocese that have proven particularly successful in implementing programs in critical development areas. This would involve identifying parishes with strong programs, e.g., in youth ministry or community outreach, and planning a trip to speak to those responsible for leading these areas and observing their programs.

**APPENDIX A**  
**BRAINSTORMING SESSION REPORT**

**Report on Brainstorming Session for Holy Name of Mary Parish**  
**Strategic Planning 2**  
**April 26, 2014, Library, St. Mary's School**

In Attendance:

Kathy Black  
Bob Brouillard\*  
Catherine Cameron\*  
George Czernys  
Judy Czernys  
Barry Fagan  
Hélène Fagan  
Maureen Gareau  
Cathy Giles  
Christina Humber  
Renate Kordos  
Ashton MacDonald  
Millie Maloney  
Cheryl Martin  
Susan Martin  
John Murray\*  
Anne Ryan  
Art Solomonian  
Lea-Anne Solomonian  
Debbie Spencer  
Nancy Timmons  
Doreen Wilson\*  
Ed Wilson  
Andrew Jahn\*  
Father Lindsay (for opening prayer)

\* member of Strategic Planning Futures Committee

Facilitator:

Louise Heslop

Agenda:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Who</b>
1:05	Start – Prayer, General Introduction and Support Strategic Planning Futures Committee members Quick introduction of participants	Fr. Lindsay, Catherine Cameron
1:15	General review of last Strategic Plan and implementation outcomes. Introduction to the goals and process of the day What are we doing, why, how? - 4 questions 1. How have we, as a Parish, done since implementing the first Strategic Plan in 2008-9? 2. What is it that we are doing well and should continue to do? 3. What is it that we could/should improve? 4. What do we want the Parish to be doing and be 5 years from now? - first 2 questions, brainstorm at tables for ½ hour; write point-form on sheet; quick summary	John Murray  Catherine
1:40 – 2:10	Q.1, 2 Brainstorm with table leader and note taker	All participants
2:10 – 2:25	Tables report on Q.1 and Q.2	
2:25 – 2:45	BREAK	Table leaders
2:45 – 3:15	Q.3 and 4 Brainstorm with table leader and note taker	All participants
3:15 – 3:45	Tables report on Q.3 and Q.4	Table leaders
3:45 – 4:00	What next & Questions – Development of questionnaire for Parish Community Circulation, compile results Report back to PC Develop action plans for programs and financing, including capital projects Thank everyone Closing prayer	Louise      Cathy Kathy Black

**Summary of Group Report Points on Q.1 – How have we, as a Parish, done in first Strategic Plan development and implementation.**

Spiritual/Liturgy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Increased pastoral activity</li> <li>•Liturgy committee – more interaction among all aspects involved and reduces pressure on Father</li> <li>•Liturgy – music at 9:00 and 10:30, more consistency at 4:30</li> <li>•Liturgy altar guild has been formed, more participation in keeping linens and vestments, all aspects done better</li> <li>•Various adult faith education activities, attracts others</li> <li>•Weekday attendance, holy hour attendance up</li> <li>•Bible study</li> <li>•Special events – altar dedication, youth Way of the Cross</li> <li>•Spring and Fall gatherings at the school – Parish-School link</li> <li>•Holy Hour Sunday night</li> </ul>
Social Life of Parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•More welcoming feeling in the Church</li> <li>•More people involved</li> <li>•Increased activity</li> <li>•Volunteer Appreciation night</li> <li>•Special events have been fantastic, people pulling together, e.g., youth Way of the Cross, altar dedication</li> <li>•Regular socials and potlucks</li> <li>•Spring and fall gatherings</li> </ul>
Community - outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Outreach – many activities, Peru parish, visits, Way of the Cross, family masses at school</li> <li>•Link between Parish and School has grown much stronger</li> <li>•Pastoral council leader and school principal engage; relationship between priest and principal has made it work despite geographical distance from church to school</li> <li>•Outreach to sick</li> </ul>
Children and Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Children’s liturgy at all masses</li> <li>•Youth impressive in Easter vigil</li> <li>•Increased pastoral activity for youth; Youth group formed</li> <li>•Increased focus on children 8-12, how to meet their needs</li> </ul>

<p>Temporal/Physical facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Council followed concerns raised in plan; Temporal council followed directive from the Strategic Plan</li> <li>•Lots of physical improvements in Church and Rectory, particularly sound system, washrooms, landscaping. confessional</li> <li>•Increased financial efficiency and accountability</li> <li>•Coordination of budget process and transparency</li> <li>•Better management and transparency</li> <li>•Work plan for building has resulted in prioritization for improvement; there is a plan</li> <li>•Beautiful gardens</li> </ul>
<p>Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Better communication between council, ministries and with school</li> <li>•Improved communication, defined roles and responsibilities, established order in what we are doing</li> <li>•Better communication between Pastoral and Temporal councils</li> <li>•Each ministry has a ministry liaison and reports to Parish Council; reporting mechanism is working, not randomly going to Father</li> <li>•Ministry responsibilities, descriptions helpful to new members, reporting and communication</li> <li>•Website is useful, and can be used even better</li> </ul>

<p>Planning Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Serious effort in the plan for planners but also whole Parish</li> <li>•Planners learned their spiritual gifts, especially those with the gift of leadership; must keep these people engaged and recognized</li> <li>•Father Lindsay’s support for strategic plan process especially recognized</li> <li>•People are thinking and reports are coming out in 5 strategic areas, not many isolated committees</li> <li>•Established order; better defined roles and responsibilities</li> <li>•As a result of the Strategic Plan, there is clearer direction from the Parishioners and shared load for decision making and implementation, thus reducing the burden of responsibility on Father Lindsay</li> <li>•Pastoral council had a mandate and direction from the Strategic Plan to implement</li> <li>•Parish Council has been looking at the Strategic Plan and because of that all the areas identified have been addressed and met or started</li> <li>•Plan has given people permission to stretch, to try new programs, to “talk among yourselves”, better communication</li> <li>•Fiscal accountability across the board</li> <li>•Almost all goals identified on previous strategic plan were addressed and generally met or surpassed</li> </ul>
<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•People do things!</li> </ul>

**Summary of Group Report Points on Q. 2 - What is it that we are doing well and should continue to do?**

<p>Spiritual life/Liturgy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Continued spiritual growth</li> <li>•Daily Masses</li> <li>•Annual healing Mass</li> <li>•Marion focus; Mass on all feasts of Mary</li> <li>•Children’s liturgy formalized and really active; at all masses</li> <li>•Attendance at daily Mass is higher</li> <li>•Leadership of Father Lindsay – great spiritual teacher; focus on faith series, Bible studies, etc.</li> <li>•Increased adult and youth servers</li> <li>•Yearly retreats</li> <li>•Pro Life movement active – Life chain, March for Life, etc.</li> </ul>
<p>Social Life of Parish</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Communication within Parish</li> <li>•Meetings</li> <li>•Social events linked to many liturgical events</li> <li>•Visits to shut-ins</li> <li>•Volunteer appreciation night</li> <li>•Growth of CWL and Knights of Columbus</li> <li>•People do things!</li> </ul>
<p>Community - outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Twin Parish in Peru, Haiti orphanage fundraising</li> <li>•Welcome Wagon involvement</li> <li>•Invitation to the community from Father Lindsay when he came; altar ceremony; open doors Ontario/tour of the church</li> <li>•Inter-faith activities – women’s day of prayer</li> <li>•Parishioners coming into the school - rosary; Mass</li> <li>•Pastoral care and outreach to people in homes/nursing homes</li> <li>•Father Lindsay out visiting the sick</li> <li>•Mats for 3<sup>rd</sup> World countries reported on in the Citizen</li> <li>•Life Chain for Pro Life - lots of people go to that</li> <li>•Relationship with broader community beyond the Church has improved – e.g., Celtic Mass</li> </ul>
<p>Children and Youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Children’s liturgy formalized and really active; at all Masses</li> <li>•Children and youth increased programming</li> <li>•Increase in youth servers</li> <li>•Youth - joining St. Isadore and HNOM youth for faith studies, tableau “Stations of the Cross”, summits, Challenge, Journey to the Father</li> </ul>

Temporal/Physical facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Financial procedures and reporting is better and more secure systems are in place</li> <li>•Priest spoke to need for greater financial contribution and it happened</li> <li>•Finance and Property committees reporting to Parish during Mass</li> <li>•Ministry budgets rolled up from Pastoral Council</li> <li>•Improvements to Church and Rectory</li> <li>•Use of school cost-free for various functions has been a boon to getting together socially and spiritually</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Calendar of events for planning and coordination across ministries</li> <li>•Calendar attachment to bulletin</li> <li>•Reporting to Parish Pastoral Council bi-annually</li> <li>•Pastoral and Finance Council reporting to Parish</li> </ul>
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reporting to council of ministries</li> <li>•Procedural manual in process of being developed</li> <li>•Father Lindsay supportive of strategic plan implementation</li> <li>•Strategic plan involves whole Parish</li> </ul>

**Summary of Group Report Points on Q. 3 - What is it that we could/should improve?**

<p>Spiritual life/Liturgy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Need to identify and call people forth who were identified as having gift of leadership</li> <li>•Invitation to new sacramental participants to keep them coming and active in the Church</li> <li>•Communion in both species at all Masses</li> <li>•Marion liturgy involving children</li> <li>•Corpus Christi procession</li> <li>•Mary grotto</li> <li>•Parish Mission</li> <li>•Promote Cursillo/Challenge for adult/youth</li> <li>•Involve more people at offertory/collection; families bring gifts up at Mass</li> <li>•Get families back after children’s first communion</li> <li>•Improve attendance at daily mass and adoration</li> <li>•Parish Missions at Advent and Lent</li> <li>•Decrease incidence of “missing-in-action” readers or servers</li> <li>•Ensure all relevant ministries practise for large events</li> <li>•Start/improve video library</li> <li>•Add women in washing of the feet</li> </ul>
<p>Social Life of Parish</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Involve people in their area of giftedness</li> <li>•Improve welcoming; heartier greetings at the door, at every Mass</li> <li>•Examine and improve the process for registration of “new-to-the-Parish form and envelopes with feedback loop; welcome folder for newcomers, something in pew to collect info from new people</li> <li>•Name tags and/or “Name tag Sundays”</li> <li>•Greet-your-neighbour part of every Mass at beginning</li> <li>•Father welcome newcomers at Masses and invite them to engage/participate</li> <li>•Bereavement group support</li> <li>•Family picnic</li> <li>•Valentine lunches, using Gr 6s, confirmation class run it, involve performance of younger children</li> <li>•Followup with sacrament receivers – baptism, weddings to keep them engaged in the church</li> <li>•Welcome Centre in the Church</li> <li>•Parish/ School spirit-wear with logo</li> <li>•Support system for “aloners”</li> <li>•Match new families with a similar family</li> <li>•Bridge gap between seniors and youth</li> <li>•Approach more parishioners to get involved</li> </ul>

Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Improve; continue on with outreach to community as per Vision in 2008 strategic plan</li> <li>•Get something regularly in the newspaper and Millstone – some from Father but also from others to tell community what we are doing</li> <li>•Improve links to agencies outside the Parish – Divine Mercy, Cursillo, Challenge – need a contact person</li> </ul>
Children and Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Children’s liturgy needs to know when to wrap up during Mass; no way to communicate</li> <li>•More involvement of middle and high school students</li> <li>•Reaching out to parents to keep them involved and their children, especially after receiving sacraments</li> <li>•Involve youth in everything we do – in Masses as readers, greeters, ushers, gift bearers, etc.</li> <li>•Identify leaders among youth; get them involved and give them responsibility for specific things/tasks</li> </ul>
Temporal/Physical facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Small gathering-place facility, off the church that will help build community; church hall</li> <li>•Children’s corner is good, so keep and expand</li> <li>•Improvements to the Vestry – e.g., bat-proof, carpet</li> <li>•Runners in church</li> <li>•New signage outside Church</li> <li>•Investigate how to increase revenues from weddings</li> <li>•Fund raising events</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Education of leaders in the ministries</li> <li>•Better communication among within-ministry group leaders</li> <li>•Meetings held regularly and foster teamwork</li> <li>•Electronic communication improvement; get people’s emails</li> <li>•Link on website for new-to-Parish registration and information</li> <li>•Regular reports from ministry areas at the pulpit</li> <li>•Strategic review of our website, who is using; are ministries using it to advantage</li> <li>•Use of websites and emails to notify re meetings</li> </ul>
Strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Benchmark measures of our church – Parish census; attendance at Mass; formal process for setting targets for improvement</li> <li>•Get community information to inform where we should expect we should be – set targets; focus on involvement and retention</li> <li>•Look to other Parishes for “best practice”</li> </ul>

**Summary of Group Report Points on Q. 4 - What do we want the Parish to be doing and be 5 years from now?**

Spiritual life/Liturgy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Full church at all Masses</li> <li>•Be a place where Catholics come for adult faith</li> <li>•Evangelization of lapsed Catholics; attract lapsed Catholics to “come home”</li> <li>•More younger families involved</li> <li>•Adult faith development in the gathering place</li> <li>•Increase membership</li> </ul>
Social Life of Parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Improved welcoming; Welcome Centre at entrance to church with information on ways to get involved; integration with Lighthouse materials, Parish library with people there to answer questions, help (see “rebuilt” and “Tools for Rebuilding” by Fr. Michael White and Tom Corcoran for model ideas)</li> <li>•More young families involved</li> <li>•Continue to be a welcoming community</li> <li>•More involvement of all in the life of the church</li> <li>•Proud of our accomplishments</li> </ul>
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•“Leader church” in Almonte</li> <li>•To be one of the most active parishes in the community</li> </ul>
Children and Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ignite the youth in our church</li> <li>•Get the youth to integrate better into the parish life</li> <li>•Embrace the children and their engagement</li> <li>•Support the children and youth leaders. Make it clear that children and youth are our future and, therefore, must be present.</li> <li>•Be a leader church for children and youth</li> </ul>
Temporal/Physical facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Stay out of debt</li> <li>•Gathering place in our church</li> <li>•Maintain the beauty of the church</li> <li>•New sign outside Church</li> </ul>
Communications and Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Find out what other parishes are doing re strategic planning</li> <li>•Better information about trends in attendance, engagement, sacramental attendance</li> </ul>
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Continue on with the improvement we have put in place</li> <li>•Vibrant</li> <li>•Something for all ages</li> <li>•Running independently regardless of who the parish priest is</li> <li>•To be one of the most active and visible parishes in the community</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX B**

**COVER LETTER AND PARISH QUESTIONNAIRE**

## COVER LETTER

# HOLY NAME OF MARY PARISH PLANNING OUR FUTURE - QUESTIONNAIRE

In 2008 our Parish undertook its first Strategic Plan, looking at what parishioners wanted from their parish and what improvements or changes were needed. In the intervening years much has been accomplished under the leadership of John Murray and the Pastoral Council. Now, after five years, it is time to revisit that Plan, assess our progress and set our direction for the next five years.

Early this spring, a Strategic Planning Futures Committee was formed, chaired by Catherine Cameron. The Committee reviewed the approach taken in developing the Strategic Plan five years ago and concluded that a similar approach should be taken for this new plan. As a result, an initial meeting was held in late April with ministry leaders in the Parish to solicit their views on our accomplishments and challenges yet to be met. The next step is to reach out to you, the Parishioners, to collect your input concerning our future direction. That is the purpose of this questionnaire.

It is hoped that each and every one of you will take this opportunity to give us your thoughts by responding to this questionnaire. The more information we receive, the better will be the resulting Strategic Plan. We wish to have opinions and ideas from as many people as possible, including youth and children. **Everyone can complete a questionnaire individually, or you can complete it as a family, as you prefer.**

We would ask that you return the completed questionnaire by **June 1-2 weekend**. Attached to each questionnaire you will find an envelope addressed to the Parish Office. You may return the questionnaire by mail or in person by depositing it either in the box at the back of the Church or at one of the Catholic schools (Notre Dame Catholic High School, Carleton Place or Holy Name of Mary, Almonte).

We will provide you with the results of this process as soon as possible. Meanwhile, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Catherine Cameron at (613) 256-1684 or by email at Catherine.Cameron297@gmail.com.

We look forward to receiving all your responses and pray that this process will guide us toward the best goals and actions for the future of our Parish.

Thank you.

Catherine Cameron  
Harris  
Chair, Strategic Planning Futures Committee

Father Lindsay  
Pastor

**HOLY NAME OF MARY PARISH – PLANNING OUR FUTURE QUESTIONNAIRE 2014**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please indicate your level of satisfaction in the following tables by circling a number from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). If the area doesn't apply to you or you don't know, circle NA/DK.

1. First, we would like your opinions about the **Spiritual Life** of the Parish.

	Very unsatisfied ☹					Very satisfied ☺	NA/DK
Overall feeling of spirituality in the Parish	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Weekend Masses	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Weekday Masses	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Children's liturgy (for children less than 12 years of age)	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Youth-oriented liturgy (for youth 12 and older)	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Music at masses	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Homilies	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Adult faith-based education	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Prayer services, e.g., prayer circle, Eucharistic adoration, stations, rosaries	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Special feast days' liturgies, e.g., Christmas, Easter	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Opportunities to receive the sacrament of reconciliation	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Involvement of children at services	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Involvement of youth at services	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK

In the space below, please suggest up to four ideas for improving the spiritual life of Holy Name of Mary:

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2. Next, we would like your opinions about the **Social life** of the Parish.

	Very unsatisfied ☹					Very satisfied ☺	NA/DK
Overall sense of community in the Parish	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Programs and activities for children (up to 12 years of age)	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Programs and activities for youth (12 and older)	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Activities for families with young children	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Activities for adults of all ages (for women, for men, for singles, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Activities for seniors	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Social activities, e.g., picnics, pot-luck events, euchre, meet & greet activities	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Opportunities to get involved as a volunteer	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Organizing, training, and recognition of Parish volunteers	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Welcoming sense in the Church for those attending services	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK
Welcoming sense in the Church for newcomers	1	2	3	4	5		NA/DK

In the space below, please suggest up to four ideas for improving the social life of Holy Name of Mary Parish:

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3. In this section, we would like your opinions about **Community work** of the Parish.

	Very unsatisfied ☹					Very satisfied ☺	NA/DK
Outreach to elderly and shut-ins	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Outreach to youth	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Outreach to newcomers	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Outreach to other groups, e.g., singles, lapsed Catholics	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Outreach to other churches in Almonte	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Engagement with Holy Name of Mary School	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Engagement with Notre Dame Catholic High School	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Engagement with our Mission Parish, St. Declan's	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Awareness and presence of our Church in the local community	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Social justice activities beyond our community, e.g., Development and Peace, international charities	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	

In the space below, please suggest up to four ideas for improving the community work and involvement of the Parish.

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4. In this section, we would like your opinions about the **Physical facilities** of our Parish.

	Very unsatisfied ☹					Very satisfied ☺	NA/DK
The appearance and condition of the church	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
The appearance and condition of the rectory	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Facilities in Parish for social events (meetings, social activities, programs)	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Facilities in the church for families with young children	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
Accessibility for those with limited mobility	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	
The appearance and upkeep of the cemetery	1	2	3	4	5	NA/DK	

In the space below, please suggest up to four ideas for improving or adding to the physical facilities available to the Parish, including any major building projects:

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5. **As we look to the future of our Parish**, we would also like your opinions about **Parish development**.

	Very unsatisfied ☹	1	2	3	4	5	Very satisfied ☺	NA/DK
Ability of the Parish to retain current members	1	2	3	4	5			NA/DK
Ability of the Parish to attract new parishioners	1	2	3	4	5			NA/DK
Ability of the Parish to attract volunteers	1	2	3	4	5			NA/DK
Communication and information to parishioners, e.g., bulletins, website, Diocesan news	1	2	3	4	5			NA/DK
Information to parishioners from Finance Council	1	2	3	4	5			NA/DK
Information to parishioners from Pastoral Council	1	2	3	4	5			NA/DK
Information to parishioners on work of ministry committees (outreach, children and youth, social, liturgy)	1	2	3	4	5			NA/DK
Add any additional areas you think need development in the space below:								

6. What **priorities** do you think Holy Name of Mary Parish should focus on in the **next 2-3 years**?

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7. What suggestions do you have for **attracting new families** to the Parish?

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8. What suggestions do you have for **increasing the attendance of children and youth** at Sunday Mass?

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9. One of the challenges to our future is the ability to meet operating expenses of the Parish. What suggestions do you have to increase weekly giving of parishioners to cover the expenses of the Parish?

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To help us summarize the questionnaire results, please answer the following questions about yourself by checking a box or filling in the lines or blanks:

10. Please indicate your level of involvement in the parish: (check one box)

Highly involved       Somewhat involved       Slightly involved       Uninvolved

11. What would increase your involvement in the Parish in the future?

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12. Please check a box for each of the following questions:

a. I use envelopes for weekly contributions to the Parish: Yes  No

b. I use PayPal for weekly contributions to the Parish Yes  No

c. There are things the Parish could do to motivate an increase in my financial support: Yes  No   
If yes, what would they be? \_\_\_\_\_

13. I have talents/expertise I would be willing to provide to the parish

(e.g., legal advice, computer skills, trade skills, etc.) Yes  No

(If yes, please fill in, detach and submit the information at the bottom of this page regarding your interest in helping)

14. Gender of person filling out questionnaire: Male  Female  We filled this out as a family

15. Number of those of each age group who participated in filling out this questionnaire:

(Write a number in each of the relevant spaces below)

Less than 18 yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ 18-30 yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ 31-45 yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ 46-65 yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ over 65 yrs.  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. Are there children under 20 living in this household? Yes  No

If yes, what are their ages? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Years with Parish: Less than 1  1-5  6-10  more than 10

18. Frequency of attending Mass: More than once/week  once/week  1-3 times/mo  Less than 1/month

19. I read the Parish Bulletin most weeks: Yes  No

20. I visit the Parish's website at least once a month: Yes  No

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. IT WILL CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TO BUILDING THE HOLY NAME OF MARY PARISH COMMUNITY.  
FEEL FREE TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY ATTACHING ADDITIONAL SHEETS.

**PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE CHURCH, PARISH OFFICE, OR SCHOOL OR MAIL IT TO THE CHURCH (134 Bridge St., P.O. Box 1029, Almonte, ON K0A 1A0) NO LATER THAN JUNE 2, 2014.**

Cut along line and return separately in an envelope in person or by mail to the Church or Parish office-----

If you wish to become more involved with the Parish, please detach and send your name and contact information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ phone # \_\_\_\_\_ email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Area I wish to get involved in or help by doing: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C**

**SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES**

**Table 18**  
**Q. 1 – Spiritual Life**

<b>Comment Topic</b>	<b>Number</b>
Mass -- one Sunday	1
-- later Sat. or Sun.	1
-- early weekday Mass	1
-- fewer weekday Masses	1
-- youth Mass	4
-- more children involvement	24
-- less children involvement	3
-- School Mass twice/year	1
-- no Mass at school	1
-- Healing Masses	4
-- Family Mass	2
-- shorter Mass, especially Christmas, Easter	3
-- less incense use for those who are sensitive	2
-- quieter church before Mass, after Mass	4
-- promote feast day Masses	1
-- sign-up sheets for families to take up gifts	2
-- more male readers	1
-- discuss Eucharistic prayer and Preface ahead of time	1
-- encourage more appropriate dress for Mass in summer	1
-- bring children to church from schools for Mass	1
-- training of servers, readers, including proper dress on altar	4
Communion protocol-- not in hand, kneeling, no lay ministers	4
Music -- general improvement needed	7
-- Sunday morning 9:00 – follow liturgy more closely, change location, too loud, be quiet and reflective at Communion	3
-- more variety	3
-- general positive for music at different Mass times	3
-- need children’s choir	1
-- encourage singing, singing leader, project words on screen	1
-- style of music concerns– new, traditional	3
-- more variety – strings, organ, small groups	3
-- no fiddle Mass	1
-- Gospel-type concerts	1
Homilies -- positive	2
-- publish sermon	1
-- shorter, more motivational, relevant to daily life	8
Priest good, spiritual leadership	5
Children’s liturgy room and supplies needed	1
Reconciliation evenings, Christmas, Easter, after Mass	3
Eucharistic adoration	2
Continue Stations of the Cross	1
Evening prayer group	1
Rosary after Mass	1
Retreats	5
Parish mission	5
More Bible studies, More faith-based education	4
Guest speakers series	2
Holy Spirit seminar	1
More work with “other” (excluded) Catholics	1
Have yearly calendar for program of faith-based activities and education	1
Spiritual Life of the Church is excellent	4

**Table 19**  
**Q. 2 – Social Life**

<b>Comment topic</b>	<b>Number</b>
Gathering place, parish hall for activities	
-- positive	11
-- get temporary structure	1
Welcoming at/before Mass	
--more welcoming for newcomers, forms in pews, newcomer centre at back of church, introduce at Mass	8
-- more after-Mass socials	3
-- smile	2
-- introduce first time members	6
-- greeters	4
-- introduce/say hello to neighbour at beginning	8
-- occasional "name tag" Sundays	2
-- speak to each other after Mass	2
Activities for specific groups	
-- youth group, youth activities	7
-- more seniors activities	3
-- more family events	2
Volunteers	
-- need more	6
-- solicit, train, recognize volunteers	4
-- use volunteers to drive seniors to Mass	1
-- need to directly solicit volunteers	1
More social activities	5
-- more variety of social activities	7
--dinner, potlucks, chili, spaghetti, fish fries	4
-- movie nights	4
-- more euchre nights	2
-- wide variety of individual suggestions for social activities – golf tournament, men's activities, picnic days, dances, teen dances, games nights for kids, coffee groups, walking club, bridge night, craft groups, bus trips, wood-working, art/painting/sketching, book club, lawn bowling	6
Fundraising/social activities – dance for Peru, garage or bake sales	2
Social activities with other churches	1
Social activity with St. Declan's	1

**Table 20**  
**Q. 3 - Community Work**

<b>Comment Topic</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
General Outreach to –	
youth	3
newcomers, identify new members	2
lapsed Catholics	2
young families	1
singles, divorced	1
stay-at-home parents	1
Youth group, youth blog	8
Improve relationship with schools	3
Formation of designated youth Mass (i.e. Sunday evening)	2
Get young people more involved in helping roles in community	1
Coordinate youth programs with seniors programs	1
Increase volunteer base	4
Increase volunteers for sick and shut ins.	4
Increased training for volunteers, notify of duties	3
Development of a driving program for persons unable to commute to Mass	2
Form Evangelistic outreach group	4
Catholic Fest	1
Drop Development and Peace	4
Twin with global southern parish	1
More social justice	1
Organize soup kitchen on holidays	1
Envelopes rather than coin box for twin Parish (income tax receipts)	1
Interaction with St. Declan's	2
Interfaith events, potluck	6
Hold monthly socials (pot lucks)	1
Organize one annual dinner (e.g., Roast beef)	1
Coordinate with area service clubs	1
Summer camps	1
Increase parish family visits	2
Weekly parish prayed for family - issue invitation	1
Improve communication re: programs	4
Market Church in the community	2
Brochure on outreach activities	1
Heading in bulletin "Outreach Activities"	1
Update bulletin to be in line with website	1
New photo of Church and St. Declan's on bulletin	1
Highlight student activities in bulletin	1
Have brief form of survey for youth, newcomers	1

**Table 21**  
**Q. 4 – Physical Facilities**

<b>Comment Topic</b>	<b>Number</b>
Parish Hall/Gathering space/Meeting space - for	31
- want more information/study/ambivalent	4
- against	2
Keep/Improve facilities for young children – crèche/play area, crying room	11
Bell tower – stabilize, repoint, windows	4
Improve access to vestry for those with mobility problems	3
Improve sound system	3
Minor Repairs - church entrance	1
replace carpet	4
paint altar rail	1
Improve lighting	1
Finish window project	1
Screen to project music during Mass and any presentations	1
Large crucifix for sanctuary	1
Replace sign outside church	1
Pave parking lot	1
Rectory - renovate	1
Actions required:	
- Clean church – general or specific	1
- Need volunteers for gardens at cemetery, church	2
- Reorganize Northex for space for welcoming and informing	2
Don't want	
- Discretionary spending - Only on "must do's" for safety, security, functionality	1
- Exterior statue	1

**Table 22**  
**Q. 6 Priorities**

<b>Comment Topic</b>	<b>Number</b>
Families & children	20
More youth involvement, activities	18
Church gathering place, space for activities and meetings	11
Community outreach	11
Involve children in Mass	6
Build relationship with schools	4
Target individual groups	4
Learning / education programs	4
Maintaining current members/building stronger congregation / attract new members	5
Mmore welcoming	5
Spiritual life	3
Reverence for communion (real presence), perpetual adoration	3
Community spirit	3
Communication increased	3
Maintain buildings / improve / cleaning / parking lot	3
Finish windows	2
Replace fans	1
Pave parking lot	1
Signage outside Church	1
Lighting improvement	1
Sound system improved	1
Cemetery	1
Liturgical celebrations / updated / modernized / changed	2
Music	2
Prayer	1
More people volunteering	1
Ministry support	1

**Table 23**  
**Q. 7 - Attracting Families**

<b>Comment Topic</b>	<b>Number</b>
Involve schools, get lists from schools, priest more active	12
Visible presence at outreach community events	8
Welcome people, hospitality, Welcome Wagon	8
Work with real estate groups & contact new families to area, new neighbour packages	7
Social events for whole family	6
Social events after Mass	5
Youth activities, including drama club; 4:30 Youth Mass – make it attractive	7
Articles in paper, Millstone, Humm, e.g., festive, family events	6
Website	3
More signage around town	1
New church sign	1
Better communication about social events	1
Rework music program	3
Be more spiritual, more Masses	2
“Homecoming” Mass	1
Renewal of Catholics	2
Be less ‘clique-ish’	3
Improve children’s liturgy	1
Install a nursery	1
Improve physical facility	1
Open house for new families	1
Family ‘buddy system’	1
Introduce newcomers at Mass	1
Comment book at back of Church for newcomers	1
Visit young families / new people / members	1
Fine as it is!	2

**Table 24**  
**Q. 8 - Increasing Attendance of Children and Youth at Mass**

<b>Comment Topic</b>	<b>Number</b>
Involve children in Mass / special Mass for youth, including older youth	18
Encourage and educate parents; their responsibility	13
Music that relates to youth / youth band & choir	6
Children's choir	2
Guest speakers / go to schools & stress importance of Mass	8
Teachers' attendance	2
Involve schools / make it part of Religion class	2
Strengthen connections with schools	2
Family Mass at School - continue	1
Bring back Family Mass	2
Activities after Mass	2
Copy successful programs from other churches	2
Youth committee/youth on Pastoral Council	1
Active junior youth group	1
Increase promotion of Youth group	1
Promote children's liturgy	1
Better training for male altar servers, workshops for altar service	2
Keep Mass short / gear towards youth / keep homily short	1
'Quiet room' for infants	1
Better fellowship space	1
More visible presence	1
Survey children of young families for ideas	1
Prayer	1

**Table 25**  
**Q. 9 Increasing Weekly Giving**

<b>Comment Topic</b>	<b>Number</b>
More info from Finance Council, oral reports, full monthly disclosure of income/expenses including diocese, explain Memorial Fund, justify expenses/ detail on amount in envelopes	12
Suggest amount for donations / just say it/ put need in simple form	11
Encourage PayPal; automatic debit	8
Set specific goals, e.g., monthly	4
Tithing	3
Suggest 'take out' expense to be donated / weekly 'Tim Horton' allowance/ spending comparators	2
Money raising events - bingos / raffles / Church supper / dance / draws / bake sales / garage sales / barbecues/ 50-50/sponsor a pew charge	3
Investigate fundraising activities at other churches for ideas	1
Encourage people to volunteer for help in fundraising if unable to donate money	1
Revive organ concert 1-2 times/year	1
Appeal to peoples' consciences	1
Ask for donations for specific needs and publish in bulletin	1
Make people more welcome and so willing to attend / attendance will solve financial woes	4
Cut back on capital projects	1