

Minutes of the Archdeaconry of France Synod, May 2016

The Archdeaconry Synod of France was held in St Jacut de la Mer from 18 to 21 May 2016. More than 100 chaplains and chaplaincy representatives met together to worship, to study the current challenge of migration and refugees and to discuss social and administrative questions pertinent to the Diocese and the Archdeaconry. The proceedings were made up of sessions relating to administrative matters concerning the business of the Diocese and the Archdeaconry, ecumenical relations, two Bible studies, meetings of the House of Laity and the House of Clergy, informative talks on the theme and worship.

Worship at Synod

The Eucharist was celebrated daily with the Archdeacon presiding at the opening and closing services. The Rev'd Peter Massey presided at the Eucharist on Thursday. Bishop David presided and preached at the Eucharist on Friday when Patrick Sturges was admitted as a Reader. Morning Prayer was said by Mrs Laura Hillman on Thursday and Mr John Errey on Friday and Evening Praise was conducted by the Rev'd Clarke on Thursday and the Rev'd Ben Harding on Friday.

Opening Session Business Matters

The Archdeacon gave a short introduction to the theme of the Synod "Migration and Refugees" and outlined the programme. He then welcomed those present - Bishop David Hamid and the Diocesan staff, guests, the speakers, the clergy and lay representatives. He asked those attending Synod as representatives from their chaplaincies for the first time to stand and introduce themselves. He gave the names of those who had sent apologies and information on the movements and changes in the clergy in the Archdeaconry since the last Synod in 2015. (See Appendix 1).

It was announced that items for inclusion on the Agenda of the meetings of the House of Laity and House of Clergy on Friday should be given to Kate Giry-Deloison and the Archdeacon respectively. The Standing Committee were identifiable by their red badges and were there to help those who had questions or difficulties.

Finally he congratulated Bob and Jane Hurley on becoming grandparents in the last few days.

There was an update on changes of personnel at the Diocesan Office and it was announced that the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager, Ian Carter, would give a talk on the current progress and training programmes.

David Bean, the Archdeaconry treasurer, presented the accounts and introduced his report which is to be found in the official booklet. He stressed that efforts were made to keep the chaplaincy contributions sufficient to keep the financial balance in a healthy state, but it was not necessary to build up too high a reserve.

The Archdeacon then asked everyone present to complete the questionnaire on ecumenical relationships in their area of France and hand to a lay member of the Standing Committee. He also drew attention to an article on the environmental matters "Not just green lungs" by Elizabeth Bussmann, reproduced from the European Anglican, and to a small booklet which would be useful in relation to the presentation on the Reuilly Agreement.

The winner for the first Synod registration to be received in 2016 was Robin Kenyon who received the prize.

Bible Studies

Bible studies on two Old Testament books were given by the Rev'd Dr Richard Briggs, lecturer in Old Testament and Director of Biblical Studies at Cranmer Hall Durham.

Dr Briggs first set out reasons why people should read the Old Testament, describing it as a textured gift, a collection of beautifully written books and a gift to Christians as part of the uniquely configured two-testament structure of the Bible.

He considered that possibly the question of its relevance for today and today's world is overrated. He thought that the world that is witnessed to in the Old Testament can be a witness to our world and we need to tune into it.

His two Bible studies were centred on the stories of Jonah and Daniel. Participants were given a short useful guide, giving the structure of the study, the appropriate verse references and important points raised by the narrative. The first study was entitled "Jonah and the Assyrians. When the other is the enemy". The second study looked at the book of Daniel and was entitled "Daniel and the Babylonians. When we are the other". Both studies were very relevant to the theme of the Synod.

Migration and Refugees

Session 2

Max McClellan had recently returned from working in Greece where he had been assisting Father Malcolm Bradshaw, the Chaplain in Athens, in his work with refugees. Max was supported by the United Society (formerly known as USPG) a church agency based in the UK

His presentation in two parts concentrated firstly on identifying just who were the refugees and migrants and then on how help was being organized for them in Greece. He stressed that there were no stereotypes - there are young and old, men and women. They come from many places because civilians are facing danger in many countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

In past months the spotlight has moved from the refugee issue in Greece because lower numbers were arriving by boat. However, Europe must remember that there are thousands of refugees already there in makeshift camps in Athens. The churches in that city have come together and are networking with the NGOs to figure out the best way to target particular resources and assistance. (*Max's presentation was emailed to all Synod members by Sarah Hardenberg on 31 May 2016.*)

Session 5

In the second presentation on this question Doris Peschke, who is the General Secretary of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), gave a more analytical view of the refugee question.

The organization she serves has the following mission statement. "CCME is an ecumenical organisation created in 1964 that serves the churches in their commitment to promote the vision of an inclusive community through advocating for an adequate policy for migrants, refugees and minority groups at European and national level. (It is) responding to the message of the Bible which insists on the dignity of every human being and to the understanding of unity as devoid of any distinction between strangers and natives." A short synopsis of her presentation is to be found in Appendix 2. (*The visual presentation was sent out by email by Sarah Hardenberg on 31 May 2016.*)

Safeguarding Update Session 3

Ian Carter, the new Diocesan Safeguarding Manager, gave a useful and interesting presentation beginning with a quote from the Bishop Robert "For me the safeguarding of children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable within our Chaplaincy communities is an absolute priority. Failure to achieve a safe and secure environment within our ministry is simply not an option."

The whole matter had become a priority in the Church of England because of the changing culture in the UK, fired by the 'Saville Effect' & many high profile cases. It has now been given new important status with a Lead Bishop National Safeguarding Adviser and a full team. This has resulted in new policies and comprehensive guidance and information being more readily available.

December 2015 saw the introduction of a new Safeguarding Policy and Protocol which focuses on the responsibilities (including audit returns) of both the Archdeaconry and each individual Chaplaincy. There is also a new training programme in place.

We were reminded that this is as much our problem in Europe as elsewhere and that it has just as much relevance for our chaplaincies. In fact safeguarding has possibly even more importance given that people may change countries and police records do not always cross frontiers.

The new Diocesan Safeguarding Team is:

- Ian Carter, Diocesan Safeguarding Manager
- Tola Akinde-Hummel, Assistant Safeguarding Manager
- Mark Gregory, Safeguarding Administrator
- Susan Verkerk, Temporary Training Consultant

They can be contacted on; **0044 207 898 1150 (office hours) or by answerphone 0044 207 898 1163**) (*The complete powerpoint presentation was sent out by Sarah Hardenberg by email on 20 May 2016.*)

Ecumenical Affairs Session 4

Report on Reully

The Rev'd Christian Krieger, Vice-President of l'UEPAL, (Union des Eglises protestantes d'Alsace et de la Lorraine) brought greetings from the Communion of the French Protestant Lutheran and Reformed churches. Synod members had already been given a booklet giving a basic overview of the Reully Agreement, but the address of the Rev'd Christian Krieger

provided in-depth information on the wider implications of the Reuilly Agreement and how today it is set in a narrative of ecumenical and theological dialogue.

He gave a number of practical suggestions as to how the various chaplaincies could establish, cement and deepen their existing relationships with the Reformed/Lutheran churches in their neighbourhoods. He laid particular emphasis on the ways in which the two churches could cooperate on theological work and stimulate common pastoral training, exchanges and twinnings. A group, which he and John Stroyan headed jointly, had met recently in Paris to evaluate the collaboration which was already taking place within the framework of Reuilly. (*His address will be sent out by email to the Synod representatives by Sarah Hardenberg in the near future.*)

Report on French ARC

Canon Matthew Harrison reported on ecumenical developments during the past year.

Concerning Anglican-Roman Catholic relations at the international level, ARCIC had now started the third phase of theological dialogue between the two communions and IARRCUM (International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission) had now appointed pairs of bishops to work together on issues of practical cooperation.

French ARC, of which he was Anglican Co-chair (Mgr Le Gall, Archbishop of Toulouse, being the RC Co-chair) was one of a series of national bodies whose aim was to transpose the work of the international bodies into the national context. French ARC now had a new secretary: Père Emmanuel Gougoud. At its meeting in Paris in April 2016, French ARC first examined the reception of its publication (launched in English at last year's Synod) entitled *O Lord, open our lips: for a Common Prayer between Anglicans and Roman Catholics* (copies available from Fr Matthew) and, in its French version *Seigneur, ouvre nos lèvres: pour une prière commune aux Anglicans et aux Catholiques* (published in *Documents Episcopat*). There were plans to distribute it more widely, e.g. to RC seminaries in different countries.

Bearing in mind that this is the Year of Mercy in the RC Church, French ARC went on to discuss, on the basis of papers prepared by members, the understanding and practice of confession and mercy in our two Communions.

In order to facilitate the practical implementation of the recommendations in *O Lord, open our lips*, French ARC was now hoping to arrange for the translation of Common Worship Morning and Evening Prayer into French. It would be helpful if any existing translations which might be in use in chaplaincies could be sent to the Rev'd John Murray. At its 2017 meeting, it also planned to discuss the topic of "Mary as a model of holiness and apostolate".

It should also be noted that a new French version of the line of the Lord's Prayer "*Ne nous soumet pas à la tentation*" would be coming into use during the coming year ("*Ne nous laisse pas entrer en tentation*").

Meetings of the House of Laity

At the meeting of the House of Laity:

- there was a presentation on the Mother's Union by Mrs Toni Chandler of the Vendée, who is working to set up branches in France. *(She has since the Synod become the Diocesan President of the Mothers' Union.)*
- it was decided to send a letter to Bishop Robert expressing concern on the reception given to the motion of the House of Laity on the Appointments Procedure. This had been passed and strongly supported by laity in 2015. *(A copy of this letter was sent out by email by Sarah Hardenberg on 7 July 2016)*
- a representative from the Pas de Calais area drew attention to the plight of the refugees in "the Jungle", the work being done by volunteers in the area and the need for various types of material aid. There was particular concern for unaccompanied minors.

At its meeting the House of Clergy:

- elected the Rev'd Peter Jackson to take the place of the Rev'd Nick Clarke on; the Archdeaconry Standing Committee;
- asked that the Rev'd Ben Harding be co-opted to the Archdeaconry Standing Committee;
- passed a resolution on making aid available to clergy in need in Europe, which was later unanimously approved by the whole Synod and then forwarded to the Diocesan Synod.

Closing Session (6)

The Archdeacon invited the Rev'd Jane Stranz, Ecumenical Officer for the French Protestant Churches, and Fr. Emmanuel Gougau, Ecumenical Secretary of the French Bishops' Conference, to address the Synod.

The Rev'd Jane Stranz reported that:

- she brought greetings from the French Protestant (CPLR) churches;
- she had recently been in Leicester familiarising herself with the programme "Fresh Expressions" which was of considerable interest to the French Protestant Churches - as had been mentioned earlier by the Rev'd Christian Krieger in his presentation;
- the joint Catholic – Lutheran report "From Conflict to Communion", published in 12 languages, will serve as a guide to reflection and discussion as the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, is commemorated 2016-2017;
- there will be a number of exhibitions on the Reformation, including one at Wittenberg;
- discussions on same sex marriages are continuing;
- preparations are in place to celebrate "the season of creation" in the autumn.

Father Emmanuel Gougau, Ecumenical Secretary to the French Bishops' Conference and Secretary of French ARC brought greetings from Monsignor Bishop Georges Pontier, President of the Bishops of France. Turning to ecumenical matters Father Emmanuel reported that there had been a rapid response to the book on shared vespers "O Lord open our lips" and that many parishes were interested in sharing Evensong or Vespers with the Anglicans. He thought that ideally ecumenism should be seen as an exchange of gifts, an enrichment of the other.

The current year of mercy (*miséricorde*) has also been welcomed by Archbishop Justin, who is very popular with Roman Catholics. The Archbishop's knowledge of the worlds of finance and business was seen as a positive contribution to his role of leadership. In these two very different worlds we also had to have *miséricorde*, which asked us to give and to turn even more towards God and to others.

The Archdeacon thanked Max and Doris for their papers on the situation of migrants and refugees. It had been very constructive to have the global picture given by Doris and a pictorial one by Max. Together they gave us a realistic and sobering presentation of the situation.

There were several important announcements:

- from 1st June 2016 Bishop David will be Lead Bishop for Italy and Bishop Robert will be Lead Bishop for France;
- although we do not yet know his plans, we expect Bishop Robert to attend Synod next year,
- Ian, himself, would be standing down as Archdeacon, as from September 2016:
- the name of the new Archdeacon would probably be announced at the end of September.

Appreciation and thanks

The Archdeacon thanked

- the Standing Committee for all the preparations beforehand as well as for their work during the Synod. He thanked the Rev'd John Murray who had organised the worship;
- Bishop David and the Rev'd Deacon Frances Hiller for all their help to him over the four years he had held office;
- on behalf of the whole Archdeaconry, Bishop David for his work during the time that he had been the Lead Bishop.

The Area Deans also expressed their appreciation and thanks to the Archdeacon, both on their own behalf and on behalf of the whole Archdeaconry.

On behalf of the women clergy of the Archdeaconry the Rev'd Debbie Flach thanked Bishop David, for all his help and expressed regret that he would no longer be the Lead Bishop.

Grants to clergy in Europe

The following resolution from the House of Clergy which, as reported earlier, had been proposed by the Rev'd Bob Hurley, was presented to the whole Synod.

"The Synod expresses concern that many UK charities which support Church of England clergy are unwilling or unable to make grants to clergy in need in the Diocese in Europe. We therefore urge the Bishops, the Church Commissioners and the Central Board of Finance to ensure that the Diocese in Europe clergy is not discriminated against by virtue of serving in Europe."

The resolution was unanimously passed.

Bishop David addresses Synod

Bishop David began by expressing his appreciation of the Archdeacon. For much of the four years he had served as Archdeacon, Ian had also been the Chaplain at St Andrew's, Pau. Later he had then agreed to work without stipend as a free standing Archdeacon. At present there are three full time Archdeacons, only one of whom has a stipend. Ian had chosen not to think of his own comfort, but to be a loving and faithful servant of the church. Bishop David had appreciated his ability to be honest and questioning, to seek the truth and his ability to seemingly wear a velvet glove, which hid an iron fist. The Archdeacon would be in our prayers and remain our friend.

Bishop David then said what a joy it had been to be at this Synod. He had found that each Synod has its own particular flavour - in France it was "*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*". We should be very proud of the spirit at this Synod as people really want to come and we are a living, loving community, a people of deep faith and commitment with a thirst for knowledge. He commended the inclusion of Bible studies in our programme,

Turning to ecumenical matters it was good to have had the participation of the Rev'd Jane Stranz and the Rev'd Christian Krieger this year and he applauded the productivity of French ARC and their work on prayer. Bishop David is now also serving as Co-Chair of IARCCUM (*International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission*), an organization which brings together bishops from nineteen different regions where Anglicans and Catholics live side by side in significant numbers, They will meet in Canterbury and Rome for a summit meeting in October 2016.

The Anglican Centre in Rome, set up in 1966 at the time of Pope Paul, is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year. There will be a gala fund-raising dinner and a service in the Church of St Gregory in Rome.

Turning to Diocesan affairs the Bishop announced that four people are shortly to be prepared as trainers for safeguarding. The culture in the Church has changed everywhere including in this Archdeaconry, and he gave thanks for those who were helping to make this Diocese a safe place.

One of the strategies designed by the Diocese was a kind of checklist designed to "gear up" chaplaincy life, to encourage incremental changes and to make improvements. We should all strive to be a people who are passionate about the church, Christ, his gospel, and bent on improving the vision we have.

Finally we are growing - on the following Sunday in Tours he would be at the inauguration of the new Chaplaincy there.

Dates for next year 17-20 May 2017.

The Archdeacon announced the dates for Synod next year, which will be held at the Abbey in Saint Jacut de la Mer, from 17-20 May 2017.

Appendix 1

Apologies for Absence

Msgr Robert Le Gall, Archbishop of Toulouse
Msgr Denis Montel, Bishop of St Briec et Tréguier
Mr. Richard Bromley, Mission Director, ICS
The Rev'd Elaine Labourel, Versailles,
The Rev'd Fred Trethewey, Brittany
The Rev'd Anthony Ingham, Beaulieu s/Mer
Ms. Janet Grant, Vence
Ms. Jane Hurley, Grenoble
Mr. Justin Hayward, Beaulieu s/Mer
Ms. Julie Johnson, Hérault
Mr. Derek Robinson, Nice
Ms. Anne Romieu, Marseille

Welcome to:

Those attending from the Diocese

Bishop David Hamid
The Rev'd Deacon Frances Hiller
Mr. Adrian Mumford, Diocesan Secretary
Mr. Ian Carter, Safeguarding Officer

Speakers

Ms. Doris Peschke, General Secretary of CCME
Mr. Max McClellan, Speakers on migrations
The Rev'd Dr. Richard Briggs, Bible studies

Ecumenical contacts

The Rev'd Christian Krieger
The Rev'd Jane Stranz

Resignations and Departures

The Rev'd Nick Clark, Chantilly, leaving September 2016
The Rev'd Keith Bretel, St Raphaël
The Rev'd Caroline Sackley, retiring in September 2016

Deaths

Mr Vance Johnson, Beaulieu s/Mer
The Rev'd John Livingstone, St Georges Paris, Nice and Biarritz

Appendix 2

Presentation of Ms Doris Peschke

Migration is one of the most important issues in Europe today politically, socially and economically. There are elections shortly in Austria & France where migration is high on the political agenda. Migration is not, however, a new question for the Churches, as the Bible has always been full of migration stories starting with Adam and Eve.

Today a migrant is deemed to be a person who has crossed a border and has then since lived in a country other than their birth country for a year. (It does not refer to seasonal workers and so forth.). A picture of the vast numbers of migrants worldwide and where they are now is to be found in "Mapping Migration" a CCME publication available on the website.

Today globally we have the biggest refugee crisis since WWII because of the situation in the Middle East and the conflict zones in other countries. Refugees, globally make up 10% of 232 million migrants worldwide. In Syria alone today there are some 12 million displaced people within the country and another 4.8 million outside the country. In Afghanistan and Iran the situation has deteriorated.

It is important to realise that the world is **not** all coming to Europe - in fact 95% of the refugees are in the Middle East and Africa where support is now very necessary. For example, Kenya, which is hosting the most refugees in Africa, is not receiving any international support. In this area people starve in the camps because donations are not forthcoming.

CCME works closely with a number of ecumenical and church related agencies like Eurodiaconia, CIMADE in France, and other Church related and development agencies. It aims to seek cooperation between these agencies & church related organizations like Caritas etc. There is also a lot of work is done at the grassroots level in the Roman Catholic parishes and in the UK where the Methodist, United Reformed Churches, African and Caribbean churches are also involved. The Protestant church in France and the Anglican chaplaincies here are also working to help refugees.

There is recognition that there is a refugee crisis and the British and German governments are giving support, but it is not sufficient. Germany has taken a million migrants. However, the biggest challenge is in the Mediterranean area. The situation in Greece is difficult and we are all only too aware of the numbers of people lost at sea.

The imminent changes in border controls (*May 2016*) are pushing people to take hasty decisions. All these decisions have come as emergency measures, often unprepared, taken without the necessary knowledge and not properly evaluated...

A "Relocation Table" has been drawn up by the European Union suggesting the numbers of refugees that should be settled in each of the European countries, but relocation will only start when there are 1.2 million refugees. We believe that is important to have an overview. How many refugees should there be in each country? Is it possible to ask countries like Slovakia to take 5,000? We come to figures that are do-able, if we break them down. We believe that the Commission should engage more with countries, such as Hungary, and work

together with the churches. There should be a common European policy in the twenty-eight countries of the European Union on the reception of refugees, with decent conditions and a workable re-settlement scheme.

Once people are refugees, they should be cared for. We need to receive more refugees, and must try to engage with governments to provide good procedures. Every refugee has the right to see his or her claim to asylum properly examined promptly. The application procedure should not be allowed to drag on for a year or eighteen months,

How can we expect Lebanon to cope with 1.2 million refugees? Where is the balance in that? Turkey itself has an internal conflict with Kurds, so there may be refugees from there seeking refuge in Europe. Syrian Kurds are being sent back into Syria. We need to find better ways to ensure a safe passage.

We must also understand the conditions that prevail in our own countries. It is not possible to compare the situation in France and in the UK. For example as the UK is not part of Schengen refugees must have passports to enter. Smugglers are a grave problem. They are using the tunnel and hiding people in lorries and the current controls have led to an increase in smugglers. We need to find a way for people to enter countries legally and for people to be able to move on. Both in Greece and in Calais people are waiting to join family members elsewhere in Europe. They often have to wait eighteen months, which is a long time in the life of a child.

What does it do to **us** when we close ourselves in and become gated communities? How can **we** justify closing ourselves off from the problem? We are perhaps afraid of the consequences - but there is a promise in the Bible "Have no fear". None of us would like to live in conflict with bombs falling on our heads – we must create a place for these our brothers and sisters who have fled from that. 'Us and them' then becomes 'us and you'.