

2017

FRANCE & MONACO  
Archdeaconry Newsletter



NEWS FROM THE ARCHDEACON  
& AREA DEANS

All Saintside 2017



## FROM THE ARCHDEACON

Welcome to the first of (what I hope) will be a quarterly newsletter to keep you informed of developments, as well as a forum for me and the Area Deans to share news and offer encouragement.

As the image on the front page of this edition suggests, I have been spending quite a bit of my time in railway stations (and airports) since I became your Archdeacon. In one sense, this is how it should be. I am enjoying travelling to our chaplaincies, spending time with the clergy and lay officers, as well as the congregations that are the bedrock of our distinctive mission in France. Many of you have made it clear that you value a more visible Archdeacon and, because I do not serve a Chaplaincy here in France, I am much freer than my predecessors have been able to be out-and-about – especially on Sundays. If you would like a visit, please get in touch, and I will do my best to work around your diary – and mine! As many of you will know, I have two bases: the Bishop's office in Brussels; and my home in the *Département* of Corrèze. Both locations offer a reasonably easy starting point for journeys across France.

### **Area Deans**

When I became your Archdeacon, the Bishop asked me to explore how support for our Chaplaincies can become more effective, particularly by greater involvement by the Area Deans. Debbie and Giles are doing sterling work, despite having huge areas to cover, in addition to their responsibilities as chaplains in Lille and Cannes. It is becoming obvious to me that there is a case for a new Deanery to cover the Western side of France, particularly around the Western Loire, Aquitaine and the regions stretching down towards the Spanish border. Similarly, I feel a new Deanery in the East, taking in Alsace, as well as the regions to the North of Lyon, would also help in providing support and coherence. The Bishop and I will be consulting about this in the coming weeks. In the meantime, if you have any particular views or insights, I would be very glad to hear from you.

### **2018 Archdeaconry Synod**

I felt we had a good time together at the Abbaye de St Jacut de la Mer, earlier this year. Many of you commented on the 'lightness of touch' which I hope will continue to be the case. Plans for next year's Synod (18-21 April at St Jacut de la Mer) are being finalised. I am delighted that the Bishop will be with us again, along with Dom Robert Le Gall, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Toulouse (who leads on Anglican/Roman Catholic relations for the French Conference of Bishops). I am delighted, too, that Michael Sadgrove, Dean Emeritus of Durham, has agreed to be with us to punctuate the Synod with biblical reflections. Until recently, Michael had a home in the Diocese. I have asked him to explore, in particular, how the New Testament can speak to us in this 'in-between time' in Europe as the UK prepares for Brexit.

### **Reuilly and the French Protestant Churches**

Alongside our excellent and long-standing relations with the Roman Catholic Church, I know several of you are working locally with the Protestant and Reformed Churches here in France. It may be helpful to know that I am a member of the Reuilly Group, co-chaired for the Church of England by the Bishop of Warwick, John Stroyan. This group

is responsible, with our partners in L'Eglise Réformée de France, Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne de France, and L' Eglise de la Confession d'Augsburg d'Alsace et de Lorraine & Eglise Réformée d'Alsace et de Lorraine, for taking forward the goals set out in the Reuilly Common Statement (1999). This was the outcome of a process begun when Archbishop Robert Runcie visited Strasbourg in 1989, and the French Protestant Churches expressed a desire for closer relationships with the Church of England, modelled on the Meissen Agreement with the EDK in Germany and the Lutheran churches of the Baltic countries. Our next meeting is in Larne, just outside Belfast, next week. If there are ways in which you think I can help in supporting local ecumenical initiatives – either with the Protestant or Roman Catholic churches – please get in touch.

On the topic of ecumenical matters, I shall be preaching in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November for the Royal British Legion's annual commemoration. Early next year, I have been invited to address a gathering of representatives of monastic communities here in France; and, in March, I have been invited to deliver a lecture on aspects of contemporary Anglicanism at the Institut Catholique de Paris. Using some words by David Ford I have given it the title ' "The Wisdom of Dispute": Towards Consensus at a Time of Disagreement in the Anglican Communion.'

### **Communications**

As Paul Needle is retiring as Diocesan Communications Officer, the Bishop has asked Liz Hudson to undertake a review of the Diocese's communications strategy. Liz has extensive experience of working with voluntary organizations, with a background in broadcasting and media training. She was responsible for the public and media relations work on the Re-interment of Richard III at Leicester Cathedral. Liz is currently consulting widely across the Diocese as she prepares her report and recommendations.

Meanwhile, most of you will know that the Archdeaonry of France has its own website at [www.anglicanfrance.fr](http://www.anglicanfrance.fr) Information and news stories from your chaplaincies will make this an even more attractive site. Please feel free to send news stories (with photos) to the webmaster, Rosemary Ulyett at [rosemary.ulyett@gmail.com](mailto:rosemary.ulyett@gmail.com) Stories that show how our chaplaincies are engaging with the wider culture of France, or addressing topical concerns, will be especially welcome. At the moment, I am aware that the Blog is rather archidiaonally-centric! I will be inviting guest bloggers from time to time to widen the appeal. I also have a Twitter feed, @gaularchdeacon that tends to have weekly tweets of what I am up to.

### **Thank You**

As we are especially conscious of being 'surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses' at this time of the year, can I thank you all for the energy, wisdom and imagination you bring to your various ministries. May the saints surround our steps as we journey on, and the light of the kingdom beckon us ever-forward.

With every blessing and good wish.

Meurig

The Ven Meurig Williams, Archdeacon of France & Monaco

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