

St George's, Paris 2018-2019

It's a challenge to write of the past twelve months when I've only been in post since November but having celebrated my first Holy Week here I now feel 'on the other side' of an obscure initiation and thus even more 'at home'!

Previous 6 months: St George's was served by a number of clergy during the vacancy but Fr Stephen Macarthy's 6 month stay gave us a real sense of continuity. We were visited by Bishop Todd MacGregor from Madagascar who spoke of the development work going on in his diocese. It has been over 15 years since the Chaplaincy welcomed a 'new' priest but the welcome was warm, thoughtful and typically generous.

The renewed Electoral Roll stands at 212, down only 14 on the previous year, which is a testimony to the close attention paid by the clergy and congregation to our inevitable 'churn'. We were privileged to welcome four previous Chaplains for a Solemn Requiem in January, a former Pastoral Assistant – now Bishop of South East Florida – alongside faces new and old. The wave of support received via social media and email on the fire at Notre Dame is a testimony to the strong bonds of affection that link the current congregation with Christians across the globe.



The Choir enjoyed their tour to Antwerp this year and have continued to be an amazing 'shop window' displaying the joys of Anglican church music to the French churches. Whilst the Gilets Jaunes caused the cancellation of a concert locally they continue singing the most amazing work week by week.



Holy Week was led by the Very Rev'd Victor Stock, Dean Emeritus of Guildford Cathedral, who with wit, learning and a lightness of touch accompanied our keeping of the Great Week. It was an enormous privilege to be a part of the whole and welcome folk from across Europe to all or part of our celebration of Our Lord's Passion, death and Resurrection. We celebrated the Vigil with an adult's baptism and are looking forward to celebrating Confirmation with adults at Corpus Christi and our teenagers at Christ the King.

'One sows and another reaps' (John 4.37) is never more present in the mind of a priest than when s/he takes up new responsibilities. Building on the outstanding stewardship of Fr Matthew Harrison the Chaplaincy has been able to renew its Guest Room and Office and update old equipment without an undue burden on our budget. The renewal of the website and our social media presence is being accompanied by attention to the whole range of our 'welcome' not just on Sunday but throughout the week.

The Malagasy congregation continues to grow with a renewed choir and a focus on our vision together. A new chaplain provides a perfect opportunity to ask questions about our sense of direction, structures and how we can resource God's mission in this place.

The Caen Chaplaincy has already been asking questions ably supported by our honorary assistant clergy and Readers-in-Training. This has been bearing fruit in richer worship resources, an extended offer and a new service time. Easter was celebrated for the first

time in a long time and we were very pleased to be able to welcome English language worshippers from across Europe.

Please continue to hold St George's in your prayers as we prepare for our Vision Day in June. Appropriately it will take place at the Basilica of Sacré-Cœur where we can focus on what and where the Heart of Jesus wants us to be as we seek to show his love to our communities and the world in which we live.