

Archdeaconry of France and Monaco – Synod Report 2018

General

The Archdeaconry Synod took place between 18th -21st April at the Abbe St Jacut, St Jacut de la mer. St Michael's chaplaincy was represented by Rev Tony Ingham but unfortunately no Lay Synod Representative was able to attend this year.

Overall attendance was 25 clergy representing 21 chaplaincies and 61 lay representatives representing 31 chaplaincies. Bishop Robert was present along with the Archdeacon, the Diocesan Secretary, Diocesan Communications Officer and guests from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Montauban and the United Protestant Churches of France. The Synod was conducted within the frame of daily Eucharist and prayer.

Speakers included:

Bishop Robert on *Strangers at the Gates and Where we are going as a Diocese*

The Bishop outlined the context and composition of the Diocese in Europe and its role and responsibilities within the wider Church and global community. It followed that for the Diocese to continue its role and responsibilities it required more funding than it currently had available. Of various options the only one that could guarantee avoiding bankruptcy in the next couple of years was an increase in the voluntary contributions from chaplaincies to the Diocesan Common Fund. This was regrettable but unfortunately necessary because there were no other viable sources.

The Bishop updated the synod on the on-going situation and latest developments in helping the increasing numbers of refugees and migrants into Europe and especially France. International and national responses have been insufficient or shamefully unethical, but there is a limit to what some host countries can provide. Dangers of stereotyping, misunderstanding and judging have hindered support. Basic Human Rights, including freedom of religious belief and practice, should be adhered to and integration within host communities encouraged. He highlighted the work of JRS Welcome and other sponsorship programmes.

Prof. Grace Davie on *Understanding religion in modern Europe from within and without*

We explored a sociological perspective on religion in Europe. Rooted in territory, our religious heritage in Christian Europe has stable cultural expressions in buildings, art and literature but also an authoritarian expression. The Enlightenment and its secularisation made religion either irrelevant or toxic. However, what is occurring now is religion that is more vicarious and a matter of choice; immigration brings new growth and expansion and the inclusion of other faiths. Militant atheism is being disturbed by the re-emergence of religion into public life and there is a question of managing diversity as a way forward e.g. France to be more inclusive in its principles and the UK to be less power conscious in its pragmatism. The connections between State, Church and welfare in Europe are not global and do not exist for example in the USA.

Immigration is presenting mental health issues that consider religion as either harmful or healing. The consequence of secularisation has led to a distancing from religion and the loss of religious knowledge and literacy. There is, therefore, an inability to communicate with migrants who still have a religious story (80% of world population affirms some kind of

religious identification that is a lived religion as opposed to a predominantly creedal religion as found in Europe).

The role of religion is now being recognised with religious ideas being used to motivate, religious practice being used to shape, religious communities being used to mobilise, and religious leaders and symbols being used to legitimate calls to action on social and global issues e.g. justice, environment, peace.

Dean Michael Sadgrove on *Citizens of Everywhere, Citizens of Nowhere, Citizens of God*

Bible Study explored the questioning of Jesus by Pilate in the Gospel of St John and what it reveals about citizenship. We looked at the use and understanding of *king* and *kingdom*, noting the distinction between *this world* and *not of this world* and the key issues of truth and loyalty. The truth of God and our loyalty to his kingdom must be first and foremost, hence we are citizens of heaven. Our earthly situation means that we are *in* the world but not *of* the world. We seek the truth of God and the acceptance of the shepherd and his authority through service, avoiding the falsehood and illusion that characterise earthly power and authority. The distinction must remain between the two and as Christians we are in the middle, witnessing to that distinction.

Minister at the British Embassy, Paris, Matthew Lodge on the current status of Brexit and its affects

There are about 1.2 million UK citizens living in Europe with up to 300,000 in France (but no one can be sure exactly!)

The British Embassy and Consulates previously had no routine active role with UK citizens apart from responding to the vulnerable and distressed. They are now establishing contact and conducting meetings to explain, listen and gather views.

The current focus of Brexit is on the UK/Ireland border. Citizens' Rights incorporate a Settled Status in your primary residence with the same rights as French citizens. However, three areas remain unresolved – onward movement for work or study, rights to vote, and the recognition of professional qualifications.

At the end of March 2019 the UK will definitely leave the European Union and with it the Single Market and Customs Union. A transition or implementation period intends to allow the management of changes and the terms of future relationships. It is very complex and very uncertain!

Concerning tax – there are currently bi-lateral agreements in place and these do not necessarily need to be changed.

UK French residents should not need to become French Nationals or need to have a Carte de Sejour but there is still uncertainty because although the UK is addressing the requirements for European citizens, the European countries, including France, have not to this date put forward their requirements for UK citizens.

Mr Michael Fegan on the Diocesan Financial Plan

This was a more detailed and welcome explanation of the Diocesan plan to fund the projects required for the Diocese to maintain its function. It clarified some of the issues that had caused concern for chaplaincies but still left questions regarding the extent to which implementing safeguarding, improving communications and introducing full-time archdeacons had been pursued without adequate funding being available to allocate to them.

General Data Protection Regulation

GDPR will be in place in May 2018 and the Diocese and all chaplaincies need to make sure they are compliant with the new regulations for the protection of personal data. There will be positive opt-in for the specific use of data e.g. names, addresses etc. and there must be evidence of consent and renewal of consent. There must be safe storage, retrieval and deletion of data and this will affect documents, mailing lists and websites. Policies and sample privacy notices and consent forms will be made available.

Full details of all the presentations can be downloaded from:

<http://anglicanfrance.fr/archdeaconry-synod/archdeaconry-synod-2018/archdeaconry-synod-2018-presentations/>

House of Clergy Meeting

Clergy reported on good Easter attendances, encouraging numbers for confirmations, interest in ministry and a shift from resident to visitor congregations.

They expressed concern over recent increases to common fund contributions, and the length of time and amount of work involved in the Diocese' vocation discernment process but also praised its thoroughness.

There has been more ecumenical progress with the United Protestant Church who have offered to share a course on preaching.

A concern was expressed over retirement preparations for chaplains and a request for more support of a spiritual nature. Clergy were reassured that such courses already exist for the Church of England and the Church of Wales.

The next Archdeaconry Synod is scheduled for 16th – 18th May 2019 at Lyon.

Fr Anthony Ingham
St Michael's, Beaulieu sur mer.