

THE SYNOD OF THE ARCHDEACONRY OF GIBRALTAR 2 FEBRUARY 2022

Theme: A new commandment

It was an early start 8.15 to meet and greet the participants of the Synod in an informal break out room until the prayers at 8.30am.

8.30 Prayers

The prayers were led by Reverend Rob Kean from the Algarve with the response by John Daffey from the Algarve and readings by Reverend Bob Horrocks from Fuerteventura and Reverend Judie Horrocks from Fuerteventura.

It's always a special time to hear this morning service to prepare yourself in a quiet way to let God into your life.

09.00 The first Synod session was chaired by The Venerable David Waller Archdeacon of Gibraltar.

It was a welcome for the guests and new members.

Father Louis Darrant welcomed he is now in Malaga

A short welcome by Bishop Robert.

Then the formal part of the meeting:-

Apologies for absence.

Procedural matters

The 2021 minutes previously circulated were accepted.

Any matters arising from those minutes.

Financial report previously circulated by Gwen Furmston (treasurer).

Proposal by Reverend Jim Booker Costa Blanca North

Seconded by Mr Andrew Johnson Costa Blanca North.

That our Annual Arch deanery Synod alternate between meeting on Zoom and in Hotels for the next five years, beginning with the 2022 Synod meeting on Zoom. Based on the facts that Synod costs are expensive. Travel costs are expensive. They are geographically spread out.

There was a show of hands on Zoom. The proposal was defeated.

Gwen thanked the Spanish Chaplaincies for the payments that had been made to Ferede. Ferede then pays the Spanish Government for each Spanish Chaplaincy ?????? There is still a large deficit to pay off.

Petrol money and repairs to cars was discussed briefly (more to follow in a Spanish break out meeting tomorrow).

Insurance for Chaplaincies is rising.

Gwen asked were there any questions arising. Petrol still seemed an issue. Otherwise the accounts were accepted.????

Coffee Break.

10.45 BIBLE STUDY LED BY THE RIGHT REVEREND JOHN PRITCHARD BISHOP OF OXFORD (RETIRED)

We were asked to read the Bible passage before the session in order to be familiar with it.

'Which of these three was a neighbour'. Luke 10 verses 25 – 37 The parable of the Good Samaritan.

Reverend John reads the passage and then re interpreted as though he is a lawyer on the spot. It is such an interesting way of interpreting it. Pretending that you are there and wondering what is this Jesus person like, preaching to all and sundry, and at all levels. He challenges Jesus and tries to get Jesus to admit he likes everyone

even if they are another race which is looked down upon. The Samaritans are sworn enemies of the Jews. Jesus asks the lawyer, 'Could our enemies ever be our neighbours'. Who is our neighbour, can we rethink our prejudices. Jesus is always stretching our thoughts. The lawyer admits defeat.

Reverend John asks us to contemplate three questions:-

1. What has been your most vivid experience of help?
2. Who are the people you find most difficult to accept?
3. Do you have any personal experience in loving an enemy and what was that like?

These questions are definitely worth discussing.

We were then exposed to some beautiful comments that Reverend John had experienced in his ministry.

Don't always sit back and say the right things. A quotation by Rabbi Blue, 'Do something for the right of heaven and heaven happens'.

The story of the black sheep and the white sheep. The shepherd was asked what happened to the 2 flocks was there a difference in their colours. The shepherd always bought the 2 flocks into question but admitted in the end there was no difference in the sheep only their wool colour.

The Trappist monks in the monastery. The Abbot had written a letter to his family if anything happened to him to be read when he was dead.

Terrorists captured the monks and killed them. The Abbot's family opened the letter. The Abbot had written that his mother must forgive all of the terrorists involved in the murders especially his killer.

Books suggested to read on this subject, Welcome to the Real World, by Godfrey Rust.

The talk ended on an interesting note. What weapon is the strongest? Answer love all of the others blow the world up.

A wonderful insight into the bible very skilfully preached.

Lunch.

Afternoon Session Diocesan Office Staff Updates.

Any questions were asked to be submitted.

Andrew Caspari

Opened the meeting. He felt that everything was being held together but there was no doubt that Covid and other factors had posed many problems to the Dioceses.

The economy and Brexit have all posed problems to running the parishes abroad and some have had to close. There is a guide which will be well worth reading.

'A Guide to a Well Run Chaplaincy Council'.

There is a new lay training course. They are building a new digital diary.

Damian Thwaites Director of Communication

Social media is going from strength to strength, especially the Canaries. There is a new website Digital Diocese coming in the Autumn. We are on Twitter and Facebook. There is a new prayer diary with 365 prayers.

Grace Fagan-Stewart Head of Safeguarding

The office is there if anyone wants to report a safe guarding problem. There are two conferences planned for 2022. Work is going into how to apologise. We don't seem to be very good at this.

Money during 2022.

The common fund achieved 95%. There will be no increase and the hardship fund will have to use the reserves. The reserve fund was used last year and the previous year to help 27 chaplaincies and about £200,000.00 was taken from this fund. Activities have to be rebuilt and restored to gain more money. We have to invest for growth. On line services had helped to bring in funds to the coffers. But not only that, they were also a strong link to help people who were not able to get out to see a church service with a familiar face to worship with.

Comfort Break 15 minutes.

Peru. A presentation by Reverend Pat Blanchard. With a video link greeting from Bishop Jorge and Father Luis

Reverend Pat had recently returned from Peru. It was an emotional reunion to see the children via video link at their school desks in a room supplied by the church fund. Each community had to live day by day not knowing where the next meal may come from. The soup kitchen was set up because of this, to help families and is well supported. A bereavement programme has been set up. The video link showed the children receiving Christmas presents. These were supplied by the Diocese of Gibraltar. We take most of this for granted, but for the children in Peru the church is a lifeline.

Archdeacon David Waller introduced the next topic for discussion.

‘What does this Synod wish to say to the Church and the world at this time that God has called us to?’

Breakout Groups for discussion.

To the churches in Europe and the world they must give the people a great deal of hope to know that there are people out there trying to help them. They are not alone and if they ask for help it will be given. Not always in a monetary way but also comforting words. You can always sponsor a child from a nation poorer than yourself. God has asked us to help we must try and reach out to poorer nations with our expertise and knowledge. Yes we have a lack of resources but we have the brains to start up many organisations and the words to go out and talk to people. They must not feel alone as so many people do when age advances. Welcome the children we need their young voices in our midst.

Evening prayer led by Reverend Canon Marcus Ronchetti. The responder was Solveig Schnur from Ibiza. Readings, Margaret Jones Menorca Rep. Intercessions Deacon Solomon Uche Icke Madrid.

A beautiful service to end the day.

Thursday 3rd February 2022 Day two of the Synod.

8.30am Morning prayers led by The Very Reverend Ian Tarrant (Dean). The responder Chris Wells (Algarve). The reading by Susan Storer (Algarve) and the intercessions by Reverend Ishanesu Gusha (Palma Mallorca). It's always a lovely way to start the day with some thoughtful meaningful prayers and readings.

BIBLE STUDY LED BY THE RIGHT REVEREND JOHN PRITCHARD BISHOP OF OXFORD (RETIRED)

The Bible Study commenced with a reading from John chapter 13 verses 1 to 15.

Jesus washes the disciple's feet. Jesus already knows that someone will betray him.

This is a very humbling experience to have Jesus wash their feet. Can you imagine the room? The dusty floor, the water in the bowl a towel to dry their feet. Peter doesn't want Jesus to wash his feet he wants to wash Jesus' feet. Jesus insists and all the disciples' feet are washed.

Bishop John gave us 3 questions

1. How would you feel if Jesus washed your feet?
2. Have you washed someone else's Feet?
3. How do you feel about God the Father being humble

Bishop John recited a story that he had heard it made us smile.

Moses is in the desert and a man asks him if he knows where he can meet Moses. Moses reply's that Moses isn't worth meeting he is only a humble man. The man goes away disappointed. Moses was that man.

The poem used for the second session was,

George Herbert's Poem, 'Love'. How would you feel if Love sat next to you. Think of a virtual dinner party which guests would you invite?

My dinner party would include my granddaughters. They are never sure if God exists. But if we were discussing it then we have a hope he will enter into their lives, and that's all I need.

To draw an end to the study we have to think that churches without love is not a church at all. There are thousands of acts are done every day throughout the world which are done without pomp and circumstance. If we think of ourselves as a parcel wrapped up as John Ruskin said, 'we make a very small parcel'.

Reverend Deborah Chapman (Barcelona)

Reverend Deborah gave a talk on behalf of the Mothers' Union. She has been a member of the Mothers' Union since 2005. She outlined the story of the start of the Mothers' Union by Mary Sumner in a time when woman did not have a voice. Mary Sumner was so overcome that she asked her husband to carry on with her speech. Mary was always passionate about families and a voice for women. Today Mothers' Union is worldwide, there are thousands of members in Africa and India. It gives them a voice where probably they wouldn't have one. Everybody today is most welcome to join. Men and Women. We need a voice and platform for everyone. Deborah asked the Synod members to start a group in their churches. In this Synod there are 13 members and 6 different nations. We are lucky in Lanzarote because our group was started many years ago. Let's not lose it. We need more support and are happy to work with the church in all aspects. Palma is starting a new branch of the Mothers' Union this year, led by Shirley Roberts. We were mentioned as one of the existing Mothers' Union branches. I felt very pleased that we had hung on.

The Synod collected money for the children of Peru which Deborah under the banner of the Mothers' Union supports. A video clip of the children and Father Luis and Father Jorge was so beautiful. It's good to see that with our help we can really help the lives of these people.

10.40 Presentation by Bishop David Hamid.

Bishop David always makes us think hard about the world we live in. He stated that our planet has been wounded by something we cannot see. If only we could spread love across the world as quickly as the pandemic spread. It has been a time when ordinary people helped us to carry on, not just the captains of industry. The bin men to clear our rubbish, the doctors, nurses and surgeons working around the clock. The churches having to close because of the spread of the virus. Some churches taking on the mantle of how to do a virtual service. With no services, no weddings and funerals for only close relatives hardly any offertory money came into the church. Were the virtual services a good thing or do we lose the spirituality of a live service. Has everyone got the technology and the wherewithal to use it. We cannot have Baptisms, take communion and Ordinations on line. All very valid points. We mustn't lose the bricks and mortar churches. Can we strengthen our own Diocese? Are we doing enough for our local community? Are they inclusive to everyone or are there cliques during and after church where people feel excluded, not welcome. Are we a LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender) Church. I had to look this up but I guess it should be common knowledge.

A question posed, 'What will the Kingdom of God look like in your Chaplaincy'.

We will never know what God has in store for us, but we do know that the church is yours. Use it!!!

12.00 Lunch break

13.15 Reports on Clergy Covenant led by David Coulston.

There is to be an update on The Clergy Covenant. This will replace the Archdeaconry Handbook.

In the Covenant

'An act of Synod' was passed in February 2019. It also applies to the clergy family as well. It will soon be available on the web site. The role of the Chaplain. Are you happy to be the chaplain? Take on board the covenant, use the guides (8 in all). Can you do better?

13.50 Spanish and Portuguese meetings

Spanish meeting in break out rooms to discuss problems. My break out room was totally taken up with the price of petrol, travel and car maintenance. Who was paying and what could they claim. There didn't seem enough time to discuss the problem and this was a complaint.

14.20 Break

14.40 Archdeacons Report.

There are 59 separate churches, 26 chaplaincies, 29 Licenced clergy and 5 territories.

A big thank you to everyone attending. The Archdeacon certainly has his work cut out with training, sorting vacancies, Diocesan meetings, open forums, safeguarding, zoom meetings and clergy reviews. Being aware of the finances.

But the main thing is,

Keep supporting your chaplain. There has been great stress through the pandemic and Brexit for them. Is there Sunday cover in your church?

For the future we have to see a net carbon zero group by 2030.

Maybe the pandemic has helped us to focus on the church and what it has to offer.

15.10 Evening Prayer

Presider Bishop David, Responder Gillian Hepworth (Costa Brava), Reading Gill Dorsett (Torreveja) Rep. Homily Bishop David, Intercessions Reverend Gillian Nobles (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria).

16.30 Quiz

Hosted by Reverend Rob Kean

Questions set by Rev Paul Strudwick (Menorca)