



Santa Margarita

## REPORT FROM THE ARCHDEACONRY OF GIBRALTAR SYNOD 2019

Once again, the venue for the Archdeaconry of Gibraltar annual Synod was La Zenia Hotel, in the Chaplaincy of Torrevieja, and running from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019. As we have been able to do over the past few years, Santa Margarita was fully represented by its two Synod Reps, Trevor & Margaret and by Revd. Paul. Kate came as a self-funding visitor and this enabled her to enjoy some time ‘re-charging her batteries’ and also meeting up with other clergy wives for mutual peer support and fellowship. We had the usual two ‘plane journey followed by car journey to the venue, but thankfully this year the flights were on time and we arrived at a comfortable time, allowing the Clergy and wives to attend an informal evening reception hosted by the Archdeacon Geoff Johnston & his wife Carol. The reps could enjoy being safely at the venue and some of us were lucky to have a wonderful sea-view room and thus were able to enjoy this



briefly before the work started. The title of this year’s Synod, which was chosen by Bp. David, was ‘Building up the Body of Christ’. The Standing Committee (SC) had held occasional meetings since the completion of last year’s Synod, working with Bp. David to create a programme which would enlighten the gathering and help us all to understand the theme. The SC consists of the Archdeacon, Area Dean Revd. David Waller, Joan Berry (secretary & Deanery Synod rep), Gwen Furnston (archdeaconry treasurer) and David Coulston (who was absent this year

due to family commitments). The SC arrived on the Sunday and began finalising the venue and generally preparing for the arrival of ‘the family’.

The first evening prayer was led by Revd. Marcus Ronchetti of Costa Blanca Chaplaincy, remembering Gilbert of Sempringham. A quote from the service booklet ‘By being guided by, and open to the Holy Spirit we pray that together we may walk with Christ and worship him in Spirit and Truth. Thus we can build up the Body of Christ’. Following this, dinner was taken, old friendships renewed and new ones started and then an early night enjoyed after a full day’s travelling.

Tuesday (Martyrs of Japan) started with Morning Prayer, led by Revd. Paula Clifford, Tenerife North, a new venture this year being that quiet Tazé music was played prior to each Morning service. This seemed to have a positive effect on worshippers encouraging us to become quieter and reflective in preparation for the services. Another slight change in the services was that all Clergy leading daily offices were politely ‘requested to observe suggestions for dress and especially in terms of an appropriate pause during the praying of the psalms and canticles’. This was suggested for consistency so as not to detract from the aim of the services. Some lay reps felt disappointed with this request as part of the ‘novelty’ of attending Synod is to share in the diversity of service presentation. However, everyone complied and tried very hard not to recite prayers or psalms before the given ‘diamond’ time pause, usually long enough to say under your breath ‘I love



Synod!' Following breakfast the Clergy Chapter started their first session, led by Archdeacon Geoff, as an update on business matters.

There followed a whole morning session on 'The Church's Ministry of Healing', led by Revd. Rodney Middleton, again of the Costa Blanca Chaplaincy.

The Clergy Chapter continued the day with a session led by The Revd Canon Elaine Labourel, Diocesan Director of Readers. Her topic was 'Reader Ministry in the Diocese in Europe'.



The opening Eucharist of the Synod was led by Bp David, whose sermon began by him asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and for its presence to be among us. He asked why we were here at Synod? He commented that Clergy have to be, they have no choice! He wondered whether we came to Synod to listen to excellent preaching! He talked with us about our particular identity as a Diocese, being a part of the Church of England but set within such a diverse European context. He

talked also about fear, how fear can be unattractive to others, and how it can close the door of our hearts where they should be loving not judgemental. By trusting in God's Grace we can build not walls but the kingdom of God. You can read Bp David's full sermon by following the link below.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JTIELBdJ16WIBR1Kjlu8et-IL2VN8LSy/view?usp=sharing>

The chosen hymns for this service worked wonderfully, including 'The Spirit lives to set us free', 'Breathe on me breath of God', 'Lord come to bless us', 'Restore o Lord', 'All for Jesus' and closing with 'Alleluia Sing to Jesus'. We all left the service feeling much heartened and ready for the hard work to follow that evening and over the coming days.

Then followed the first business meeting of the Synod, led by the Archdeacon. All new Clergy & Synod reps and visitors were welcomed and a minutes silence was observed for the Clergy and Synod reps who had sadly died over the past year. It was announced that ballot papers would be available for the election of 2 Lay reps and 1 Clergy rep to stand for the Diocesan Synod. The ballot would close on the Thursday. Following routine 'housekeeping' announcements, the Archdeaconry treasurer made her precis report. Her full report had been circulated prior to the start of Synod. Gwen stated that all currency was reported in GBP. The Archdeaconry accounts for 2017 had been independently examined and audited and the meeting voted to accept them. The accounts for 2018 were as yet unaudited but would be done so during this year. The meeting accepted this. There were no major changes expected this year other than had been previously notified – the mileage rate will remain at 0.36p/km, and the CMD at £200 per Clergy/Reader. Each Chaplaincy will pay £2.03 per Electoral Roll member (ERM) to the Archdeacon's support fund and £2 per ERM to the General Archdeaconry fund. As yet there was no figure available for the cost of FEREDe although it is expected to be the same as 2018. The treasurer advised that the Chaplaincy 'due' letters would be sent out by the end of May. She asked that if any chaplaincy has a change in treasurer, they let her know as well as Diocesan Office and the

Archdeacon. Archdeacon Geoff then raised the Minutes from 2018, asking the meeting for approval. Approval was given and he duly signed the Minutes. There were no matters arising. The Diocesan & General Synod reports were accepted. At this point there should have been a report by Revd. Doreen Cage on 'Eco Church'. Unfortunately Doreen was unable to attend so Archdeacon Geoff gave a brief résumé on the Diocesan Synod hearing a presentation and supporting this incentive as it fits into the Diocesan strategy. It will mean every chaplaincy within the Diocese registering and signing up as an Eco Church and agreeing with and abiding by all the criteria. The more chaplaincies which sign up the more credit to the Diocese. NB There is a brief article about this in the latest Diocesan Annual Review (copies available in church) and a link on the DiE website. The business meeting now concluded, a welcome dinner was enjoyed.

Wednesday Morning Prayer was led by Revd. Don Witts from the Costa Blanc chaplaincy followed by a swift breakfast before the first session of the day, that being Bible study led by The Revd. Dr. Richard Briggs. Dr Briggs attended our Synod a few years ago so those among us who remembered him and his teachings were very pleased to see him return. He has the most engaging presentation skills and loves and knows his subject so well he very rarely refers to any notes or aides. His topic this year was the Psalms and he taught that psalms resource our discipleship and are prayers to God, all 150 of them! His first presentation was on Psalm 1 – this bringing many happy memories of school days R.E./Scripture lessons and learning this Psalm by rote, but how interesting also to learn that Psalms 1, 2, 3 are classed as 'setting out the way' psalms. He taught us that the psalms were acrostic. He then moved to psalm 23, telling that this psalm was used as a funeral text in the USA in the 19th century. All too soon it was over and the meeting expressed grateful thanks for this eye-opening session.

Following a brief break, Bp Robert Innes began his presentation introducing Mr Andrew Caspari who has been appointed as the new Chief Operating Officer (Diocesan Secretary). Andrew has a history of being a Radio Merseyside presenter, he's a Christian and he's European – the clue being in his name! Bp Robert stated that he felt Andrew is a great communicator and was a gift to the Diocese. Andrew recognises that this Diocese has great diversity – from Moscow to Madeira therefore there are a range of challenges to be met. He wanted to make 'mission' a major theme, along with stewardship and care where he strongly advocates safeguarding. Bp Robert offered the analogy that the church is a body and asked people to comment on which part of the body was the most important – lots of interesting comments, as you can imagine! Bp Robert also explained that the Diocese is treated as a province of Canterbury within the CofE. He also explained that 2018 was a year of decision for the Diocese. The Diocese had grown hugely and therefore increased staffing in both Tufton St and in Brussels was required. The safeguarding team had increased but sadly the Diocese is in serious financial deficit and if improved finances are not achieved then the Diocese will be out of cash by 2022. This is a startling thought and this comment raised quite a reaction from the meeting. Bp Robert closed his presentation in prayer, reflecting from John and the 'upper room' story, and asking for peace in our hearts. He then displayed the Diocesan prayer. To read all 58 slides of Bp. Robert's presentation, including a 'Developing picture of the diocese and how it is being



funded' and the changing faces in the Diocese, please use the link:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KWb8\\_yhrAX0Tog4ctdmcNgl1tp9PW8/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KWb8_yhrAX0Tog4ctdmcNgl1tp9PW8/view?usp=sharing)

The whole afternoon was led by Bp David, on the theme of 'Building up the Body of Christ'. He gave a history on the background of the Diocese in Europe (DiE) within the CofE and told of the 300 configurations over 40 countries of the DiE. Despite the DiE being separated from the 'mother church' the DiE has maintained 165 licenced clergy, 110 Readers and 500 clergy with 'permission to officiate'. The DiE is the only part of the CofE to be totally self-funding. He told us that Spain legally recognises the Anglican community as a church. Bp David then asked just what the meeting felt God had done in Europe. He challenged us to think of our own congregational identity, its unique history and its place in the whole wider church. He asked what gifts and experience we all had brought and could bring to be an instrument of God's mission in the future and reminded us that joy is a real gift. He told us that we have the ability to work ecumenically but asked what and how does it shape our mission in Europe now. Can we as Christians make a contribution to modern society? He raised the issues of the cover up of abuse by clergy, the history of Spain and its civil war, reminding us all that the church's contribution has not always been a blessing. He commented that the Christian religion is a social religion and we must live our faith in society. He gave unsettling percentages that in England, only 7% of young people identify themselves as part of the CofE and startlingly 55% of Spanish young people never go to church unless it's a family occasion. He closed his first session asking how we can contribute to society, advising the meeting that only Anglicans were supportive in the plight of immigrants in Hungary. At this point a welcome break was enjoyed! Bp. David resumed reminding us that we are created in the image of God; we grow by the Spirit, by bible reading and prayer. Here follows some of his teaching. The Beatitudes are the teaching. In Anglicanism is the vision of embracing diversity. Pentecost is for all nations. As a mixture we can appeal to all. Money does not bring happiness. Christians know a better way starting in our own Christian communities where people can be truly themselves sharing love, joy and troubles. The liturgy teaches and inspires. We offer simple and humble gifts. Are we on God's side, personally and as the church? Who are the poor and how do we draw alongside? The Meissen agreement of 1988 brought reconciliation between British and German churches. Dialogue continues with the RC church and others. Globalisation is new economically but not new for the church. We seek relationships of conscience. We can strengthen our link with Peru as part of our global family. We can embrace the fact that we are migrants and as migrants we can help migrants. We should beware of ex-pat versus migrant thinking. We are in the humanity business and know no borders. Pope Frances said 'We should not be scared by the integration of cultures – Europe was formed by the integration of cultures'. We Anglicans have so much to give – the future is bright.



The evening Eucharist this night was held in a nearby RC church. The celebrant was Revd. Canon Alan Bennett from Costa Almeria/Calida Chaplaincy, who was celebrating his 50 years of ministry. The preacher was Revd. Canon Dr. Medhat Sabry from the Casablanca Chaplaincy also Area Dean for Morocco & the Canary Islands. His homily was entitled 'what we do and what God wants us to do'. How easy it is for us to do what we think God wants us to do and not listen for that still small voice of calm telling us what He wants us to do. Canon Medhat spoke with such humility yet with such power and love that a silence fell over the service as people reflected on just what he had said. The keyboard playing at this service was different this year as we didn't have the distinctive talents of Revd. Paul Needle but enjoyed the softer presentation by Revd. Phillip Bourne from the chaplaincy of Porto. Following a lovely walk back to the hotel an enjoyable dinner was partaken.



Thursday Morning Prayer was celebrated by the Lay Readers from Gibraltar, Pam Baker & Audrey Singh. The congregation was noticeably smaller than usual. Perhaps there are still a few Clergy and Lay people who are not totally comfortable with ladies leading a service. During this service, Bp David relicenced Revd. David Waller from Mallorca.



Following breakfast, the second bible study session by Revd. Briggs was held. This morning he taught on psalms 22, 30, 37 & 73. He told us that these psalms cover every stage of spiritual



life – the good and bad days, and they show that God is not absent in any occasion. Revd. Briggs is passionate about the Old Testament and encouraged us to be aware of how the Old Testament echoes the New Testament. He closed by saying that when we are praying and praising God we say things that are truer than we can explain or analyse. We hope he returns to a future Synod.

After a quick coffee break 2 new faces were welcomed to Synod. Firstly, the Diocesan Registrar, Aiden Hargreaves-Smith. He spoke to us about his role as Diocesan Registrar as well as his career background, being in ecclesiastical practice for the past 10 years and being trained as a solicitor. He is a member of the Bishops' Council and an officer of the Diocese. He said he's there for the good of the Diocese, supporting the ministry of the Bps, supporting the safeguarding team and in fact everyone in the office, making sure everything is legal i.e. the licencing of clergy, advising on chaplaincy constitutions, and presiding at elections. He reminded us that law is not an end in itself, the law is there to serve and safeguard us, and he referenced this in relation to the licencing of clergy law which has been updated. He reminded us about this year, coming up to chaplaincy AGMs that the Electoral Roll is to have a full revision and the process should be followed thoroughly.



The second new face was Damien Thwaites, the new Diocesan Communications Director and Europeans Institutions Attaché to Bp Robert. He is based in Brussels. He gave a brief résumé on his work history, being a senior civil servant for many years and working on trade relationships with Turkey and EFTA States as well as on diplomatic relations with Russia. He showed slides relating to the Brexit process, sadly nothing that hadn't been reported on before. He stated that the Diocese had been asked to comment on Brexit to the Church Institutions.



The final session of the morning was the Archdeacon's report. Fr. Geoff started his report by saying how Bp. Jorge, from Peru, had spent time after being with us at last year's Synod, visiting Chaplaincies across Spain and how both he and Bp Jorge were pleased that stronger links and understanding between the Anglican Diocese in Peru and the DiE were being created, each becoming more aware of the other's needs. Fr. Geoff then showed slides of all the Chaplaincies he had visited over the past year, around 26, showing the licencing/re-licencing of Clergy, meetings for chaplaincy vacancies, SC meetings, Staff meetings, and attending the Diocesan Synod in Cologne. He also thanked his wife, Carol, for taking most the photos. It is worth remembering that Fr. Geoff is undertaking the role of Archdeacon for Gibraltar Archdeaconry on a voluntary basis, claiming travelling/accommodation expenses only and thus saving the cost of a salary. What will happen from November when he retires will be interesting. Fr. Geoff was thanked for his hard work for the Archdeaconry.

The afternoon sessions took a different form this year. Instead of the usual bible study, or finance or meditation sessions an event called 'market place' took place. Chaplaincies had been asked to bring something that reflected an area of good practice within their Chaplaincy. Menorca did not have a table presentation, but Trevor & I did go around the other 'stalls' talking about the possibility of our chaplaincy taking up the Menorca GOB initiative of discontinuing the use of plastic materials/items in use in church and social events in favour of bio-degradable products. Other Chaplaincies expressed interest in possibly doing similarly.

After this, the meeting split into two groups – a Spanish section and a Portuguese section to discuss business issues. For the Spanish meeting, Revd. John Chapman from Barcelona chaplaincy was elected the new chairman, replacing Revd. Paul Ormrod who has now moved from Madrid Chaplaincy to one outside this Archdeaconry. Celia Paterson reported on the issue with receiving renewed paperwork from FEREDÉ, stating that they were overwhelmed with all the legal changes which were ongoing. She encouraged Chaplaincies to check their legal representatives and that those named are all resident. She confirmed that if any leave the chaplaincy their names need not be removed. All legal reps must be named and identified each year at the AGM. Celia also expressed her concern that legal requirements in Spain were becoming more demanding but that she herself was not legally trained. She felt the Spanish section did need a lawyer and the meeting agreed that Celia could formally ask the lawyer who helps with the Madrid chaplaincy legal work if she could help with translations etc. Celia reported that she had attended a forum run by FEREDÉ on 'what is an Evangelical church' and on human sexuality. A question was raised by Costa Brava chaplaincy about running a local lottery. It was agreed that if the chaplaincy produced their own tickets for any non-monetary prizes they could offer them by asking for a donation. Celia was thanked for her hard work for us all with FEREDÉ.

The penultimate session of this year's Synod was a report by Revd. Deborah Chapman, Barcelona Chaplaincy, on her role as Archdeaconry link with the Anglican Church in Peru including feedback on her visit to Peru in January 2018. She had also added to the Archdeaconry prayer diary a corresponding link to a church in Peru and encouraged each chaplaincy to use these diaries in their prayers. A copy of Revd. Deborah's report is attached.

Now Aiden Hargreaves-Smith, accompanied by the SC came and Fr. Geoff announced the results of the Diocesan Synod election for Clergy & Lay reps. The Clergy rep is Revd. Canon Dr. Medhat Sabrey from Casablanca Chaplaincy and the Lay reps are Celia Paterson, Madrid Chaplaincy, and Marisha Carter from Tenerife South Chaplaincy. The meeting warmly congratulated them on their appointments and thanked them for their commitment. Following this, Fr. Geoff brought the 2019 Synod to a close. He advised that the Synod dates for 2020 will be from 28<sup>th</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 at the same venue. He also reminded the meeting about the forthcoming retreat to be led by Bp. David in Barcelona in May – leaflets were available. He thanked all the speakers and guests and congratulated Fr. Alan Bennet on his 50 years of ministry and of course the hotel staff who had been so professional and helpful during the week of Synod.

The closing Eucharist for this Synod, which also contained a healing service, was celebrated by Fr. Geoff, supported by Revd. Rodney Middleton (Costa Blanca) & Revd. Judie Horrocks (PTO Fuerteventura). The healing teams



were Revd. Louis Darrant (Costa Azahar) & Vicky Pacey (Mallorca); Revd. Rob Kean (Algarve) & Marisha Carter (Tenerife South) and Revd. David Waller (Mallorca) & Pam Baker (Gibraltar). Prior to this service a silent collection was taken to support the Anglican Church in Peru. Santa Margarita donated 50€.



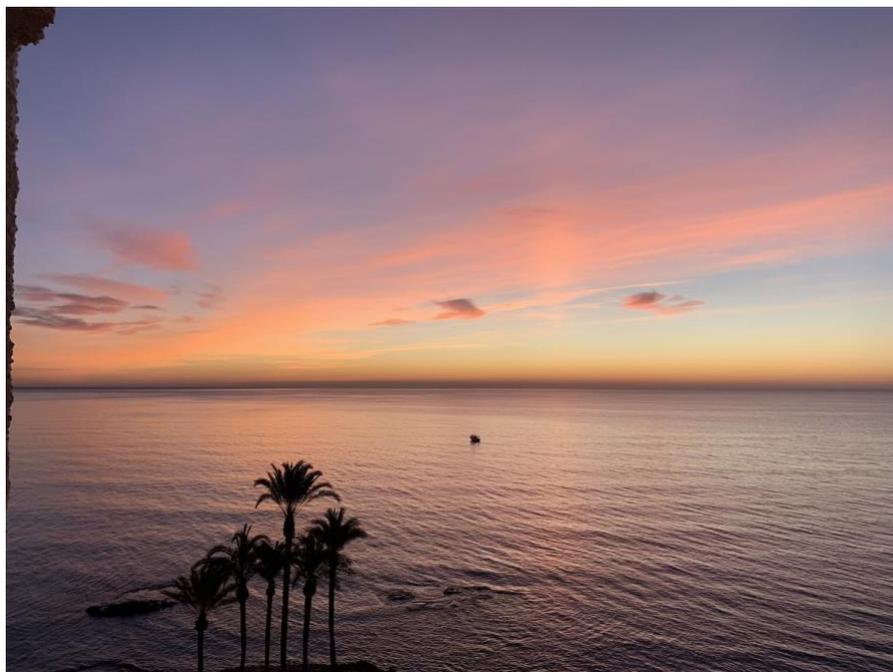
After a swift dinner, the evening concluded with another change from norm, a barn dance, complete with musicians and callers. A good evening was had by all.

The final service of the whole week was the closing said Eucharist on the Friday morning led by Revd. Richard Seabrook SSC of Torrevieja Chaplaincy and following a quieter than usual breakfast time, fond farewells were bade for another year.

So, that's it – our report complete for another year. We have added more photos this time too as we see the names of people on info from Diocesan House or on the Diocesan website, so we thought people might like to see who these names relate to.

We have been asked why we take the time and trouble to submit such a full report from Synod when some people tell us they don't bother to read it. Firstly, we are strongly charged to, secondly all chaplaincies are required to send Lay reps and we were elected to go to represent Santa Margarita in the proceedings and

thirdly we ourselves feel it is right that we try to share our experiences with the church members so that everyone can get a taste of what we experience and understand some of the things which Synod reps learn which are useful to be shared with their Chaplaincies. We give up a week of our time to attend and on the whole, we do gain so much, especially having the wonderful chance to share worship and prayer with so many committed Christian brothers and sisters from a myriad of backgrounds, from such a diversity of countries and far spread areas yet united as fellow Anglicans.



Trevor & Margaret Jones

Archdeaconry Synod Reps

March 2019

Acknowledgement & thanks – Most of the photos this year have been supplied by the ‘official’ Archdeaconry of Gibraltar Synod photographer, Revd. Paul Strudwick.