

ARCHDEACONRY OF GIBRALTAR

Virtual Synod, 2nd and 3rd February 2022

Report to Chaplaincy Council and the APCM

The Chaplaincy of the Holy Spirit, Costa Blanca was represented by our clergy (Fr Marcus, Fr Rodney and Fr Jim) and by our elected lay representatives (Neville Jarrett, Andrew Johnson, Dennis Johnson, Gemma Preece and Colin Welch). A further 4 of our congregation joined us as observers. If you have any questions, feel free to address them to any of us.

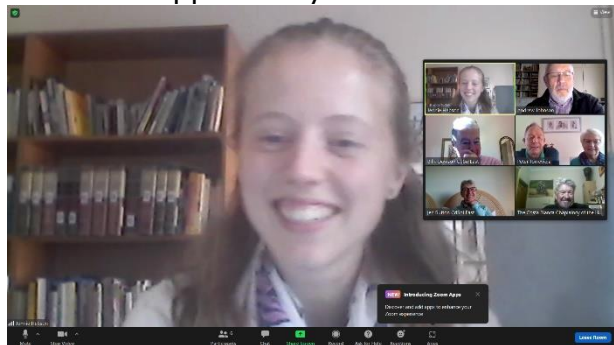


The theme of Synod was – A New Commandment.....

John 15: v12 – My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

1 Timothy 6: vv18-19 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

One of the greatest pleasures of our synod is the opportunity to meet and share with representatives from chaplaincies across Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar and Morocco ... and to realise that we are not alone! Early on we met Jennie Hebson an inspirational young lady from Barcelona, who serves as youth worker for the chaplaincy there. It was reassuring to hear that youth are an important part of our work in some parts of the Archdeaconry!



Business Meeting - The meeting was opened by our Archdeacon, David Waller, who is a good friend to this chaplaincy. At the end of the two days Fr David reviewed the activity of this Archdeaconry and presented this slide, which demonstrates the sheer scale of the Church of England in this corner of Europe. It justifies showing at the beginning to put the work of this Synod into perspective.



Where we are!

- Fifty nine separate church communities / venues
- Twenty six chaplaincies
- Served by twenty nine licensed clergy, plus PIO's, Readers, CWL's
- Five nations or territories
- Andorra to South Tenerife is just over 2,500 km's (twice the distance Andorra to London!)

A map showing the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), Gibraltar, Morocco, and Algeria. Numerous blue location pins are scattered across the region, indicating the locations of church communities and chaplaincies. Labels for Andorra, Portugal, Spain, Gibraltar, Morocco, and Algeria are visible.

The first business session focused on the Treasurer's report and agreements on the various charges and costs. As far as possible fees are either deferred or frozen, to recognize the financial challenges that we face at present.

Fr Jim and Andrew submitted a proposal that Synod should recognize the difficulty for many chaplaincies to cover the costs of attending physical Synod meetings and that for 5 years we should alternate between virtual (Zoom) meetings and physical meetings. This to start with this meeting, by Zoom, followed by a physical meeting in 2023. The motion was well supported, but defeated on the technicality that it bound the hands of the Standing Committee to hold physical meetings when circumstances might not allow.



Bishop Robert, our diocesan bishop brought greetings to this synod meeting, on the feast of the presentation of Christ – the story of the faith of Simeon and Anna. He reminded us that God is faithful in the difficult times, and he assured us of his prayers for the church in this archdeaconry, especially in these difficult times. **A video of this talk can be viewed by this link** <https://youtu.be/B--codq6Ly0>

Bible Study – Our 2 bible study sessions were led by the gentle, but inspiring Rt Rev John Pritchard, retired bishop of Oxford.

In the first he took the story of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10.25-37. He then told the story from the perspective of the lawyer who challenged Jesus, presumably trying to catch Jesus out. “Who is our neighbour”, is a question asked regularly in the bible and still to this day.

+John encouraged us to widen the concept of loving to include the many beyond our own faith community – “There are no bounds to those who count as our neighbours”. It is not sufficient to just be a good person. “We must be prepared to love our enemies, as well as our friend.”

He then asked us each to consider 3 questions –

- 1) To recall an experience of being helped by a good Samaritan.
- 2) Who are the people that you find most difficult to love? And how might we include them in the circle. AND
- 3) A personal experience of loving and enemy – what did it feel like?

In his second session, on day 2 Bishop John took as his text John 13: 1-20, the story of the washing of the apostles’ feet in the upper room.

He suggested that Jesus love and humility are “joined at the hip”. And questioned whether the structure and titles of the church reflect that humility. “As a Church we should serve one another as Christ looks on. We look through the bread and wine at one another”.

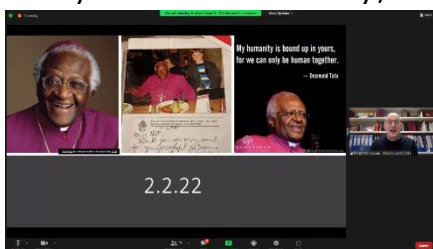
+John explained our role as Christians as “Letting divine love flow through us without limit, serving the least, the lost and the lonely”. He then, again, posed 3 questions for us each to consider –

- 1) How would it feel if you let Jesus wash your feet?
- 2) Have you metaphorically washed someone else’s feet?
- 3) How do you feel about the Father Almighty being humble?

You might like to read Bishop John’s latest book, “20 Questions Jesus Asked (and how they speak to us today)”. **Videos of these talks can be viewed here –**
Bishop John Pritchard Day 1 Bible Study <https://youtu.be/YuuBm9LQjhw>
Bishop John Pritchard Day 2 Bible Study <https://youtu.be/m4UZIUrA-TY>

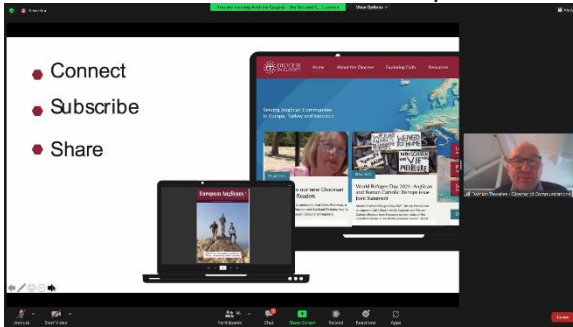


Diocesan Office Staff Updates – The senior officers of the diocesan office, led by diocesan secretary, Andrew Caspari, looked at the activity and priorities of the administration of the diocese. This session happened on 2nd February (2/2/22), which Andrew referred to as Tutu Day, and suggested that we all have much to learn from the faithfulness of the late Bishop Desmond Tutu. He recognized the challenges of undeniable impact from Covid, Brexit and the economic crisis. He referred to initiative fatigue but reminded us of our responsibility as Christians to care for God’s creation and to strive to grow the church.



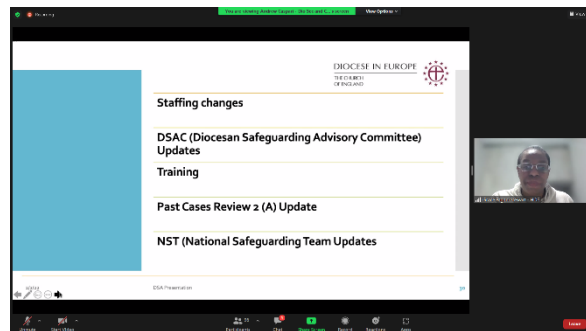
He referred to a guide to a well-run chaplaincy council and the pledge on email use – to be considerate, constructive, and concise.

He then explained that all digital communication is being reviewed and introduced Damien Thwaites, the communications officer. Damien referred to the role of social media, thanked this archdeaony for providing the greatest input, and included examples from our own chaplaincy. He mentioned the publicity around Fr Ray Andrews' appointment as Diocesan Spiritual Advisor, and mentioned Fr Marcus's radio outreach, and his appointment as canon.



Damien explained that there are increasing resources online to facilitate learning, and a developing range of technology to facilitate "hybrid" worship (a combination of in person and live streamed worship, online).

Grace Fagan-Stewart, the head of safeguarding then presented an update on this subject. This image shows the subjects covered. We are so blessed to have had Gail Johnson to lead this chaplaincy (and others) through the challenges of safeguarding for several years now. Finally, Andrew returned to review the diocesan finances. He thanked chaplaincies for continuing to meet the costs and explained that no changes are planned in the total amounts requested of chaplaincies. And said that £1million less would be required up to 2025, with breakeven projected by then.



Videos of these talks can be viewed by these links <https://youtu.be/WdSD-pAsq2o>.

Peru Presentations – For many years now this archdeaony has partnered the Anglican diocese in Peru. We met again Bishop Jorge and Fr Luis, by video links. And we had a brief presentation from Revd Pat Blanchard, who has worked for the church in Peru. Videos of these talks can be viewed by these links –

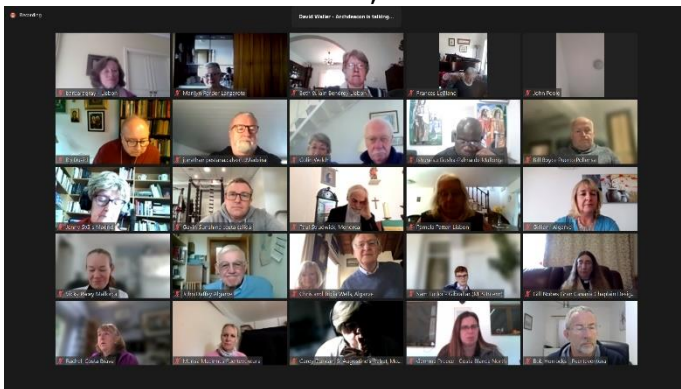
Bishop Jorge's synod address video <https://youtu.be/ZLVVzURVTHM>

Fr Luis's synod address video <https://youtu.be/VXLnfWh3qgl>

Peru Presentation in full <https://youtu.be/ULu-VkgZbb8>

Group Discussion – The Archdeacon led a discussion about what synod wishes to say to the church and the world at this time that God has called us to do.

“What are we called to hear”, “What is the world saying to us”.
Through breakout groups we all had the opportunity to share our thoughts. The feedback was then also shared and a number of key thoughts emerged –
Hope
Joy
Compassion, not convenience
Be bold
Speak with a common voice – the young are the future of the church, recognized as a real issue among the retired ex-pat communities!
Reduce unnecessary duplication, minimize bureaucracy and share our riches.
Listen to our communities and respond to need
Unless all have a share, NONE HAVE A VALUE!



And most importantly “We are the body of Christ”

Each day started with morning prayer and ended with evening prayer. On this first day, when the diocesan prayer calendar focusses on the work of our own chaplaincy and our chaplains, Fr Marcus led evening prayer.

Mothers Union Presentation – After the second bible study, day two continued with a presentation on the MU from Deborah Chapman, a chaplain in Barcelona and Andorra. She mentioned 4 branches in the archdeaconry and encouraged other chaplaincies to start branches. **A videos of this talk can be viewed by this link - <https://youtu.be/USWuDe4QhFA>.**

Bishop David – Our suffragan bishop then took us through his thoughts under the title “Love in the Time of Covid”, referring to the best seller “Love in the Time of Cholera”, which saw sales surge in the pandemic. He talked about the p[ain of separation and loss, and explained the opportunity that the current situation presents for change and re-orientation. An opportunity to help reshape the world – we are a global body.



A new call to be prophets for justice and equality
+David repeated the Pope’s guidance that we must avoid antibodies to indifference. And urged a new impetus to care for creation, managing climate change and its impact. He asked each chaplaincy to consider, “What will the kingdom of justice, love and peace look like when it arrives in your chaplaincy. **Videos of this inspiring talk can be viewed here – <https://youtu.be/ilthWkABlpk>**

Clergy Covenant – David Coulson, who is a long standing member of the Archdeaconry Synod, and lay chair of General Synod, presented this topic, aimed to properly take care of the clergy, because that is (of course) the right way to do things. This slide shows the relevant wording of the commitment, adopted throughout the CofE.

If you want the actual text.....

The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scripture and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in every generation.

In its formularies, the Church of England recognises that God calls men and women to serve as deacons, priests and bishops to build up and equip the whole People of God.

Conscious that such a calling is both a privilege and a demand, we as the Church of England commit together to promote the welfare of our clergy and their households in terms expressed in the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing.

We undertake to work together to seek to coordinate and improve our approach to clergy care and wellbeing that ordained ministers flourish in their service of the mission of God within and beyond the Church.

This link takes you to the series of User Guides - <https://europe.anglican.org/resources/downloadable-forms>

We should all review our behaviours. Bullying of anyone in the church (or outside) is NEVER appropriate.

As a rule of thumb, we should be able to say that we would all be happy if we were the chaplain in the relevant circumstances. **A video of this session can be viewed by this link** <https://youtu.be/GdZR4bdldjk>.

Living in Love and Faith – Beth Bendrey explained a course of workshops designed to help build and strengthen contacts and relationships, to build the community of the Church across all parts of our diverse humanity, regardless of gender, sexuality, race etc. **A video of this talk can be viewed by this link** <https://youtu.be/c8CiVCf0ghE>

Spanish Section Meeting – Celia Patterson, of the Madrid chaplaincy acts as our contact with FEREDÉ, the association of non-Catholic (meaning non-Roman Catholic) churches in Spain, which establishes the rules for our clergy. They fight for our priests to get comparable conditions and benefits in their relationships with the state that Roman Catholic clergy enjoy. Neville repeated a request for a simple explanation of the role and procedures relating to FEREDÉ for the Archdeaconry handbook, to help new clergy and officers.

Regarding Covid 19 regulations, Celia repeated again that FEREDÉ still urge us all to act on the cautious side of the rules and to avoid "stretching the boundaries". This has been their advice throughout the pandemic.

Closure – The formal sessions were closed by the Archdeacon, with his review of life in the archdeaconry, and with thanks to the organising team and to chaplaincy councils. This was followed by Evening prayer led by Bishop David, who was also our preacher. **A video of Bishop David's Thursday Sermon can be viewed here - <https://youtu.be/xR4LfxRA8Sg>**

And finally, we enjoyed a 40-minute fun quiz to wind down at the end of the evening. Fr Rodney was beaten to the winning post by just one point!

In 2023 Synod dates are 31st January to 3rd February

Andrew Johnson
Lay Representative
4 February 2022