

Archdeaconry Synod 2024

As last year, the Synod was held at the Diamante Beach Hotel in Calpe, and it followed the usual 'action-packed' programme, beginning on the evening of Tuesday 31st January with the opening Eucharist presided over by Bishop Robert, and followed by the first Synod business session chaired by Archdeacon David Waller, during which Joan Berry was appointed Lay Vice Chair, and at which the Archdeaconry treasurer announced a year-long handover to a new treasurer

A take-note motion on an aspect of Living in Love and Faith was moved, noting that

THIS SYNOD takes note of

- the recent developments in the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith process;
- the diversity of views held regarding the Church of England's approach to clergy who enter into a same sex marriage;
- the lack of provision in some countries within the Archdeaconry (and wider Diocese) of any form of legally binding same sex partnership other than civil marriage, which is different from the position in England;
- the potential consequences of that lack of provision for those clergy wishing to enter into a legally recognised same sex partnership consistent with the teaching of the Church;
- the continuing work being undertaken by the Living in Love and Faith Implementation Steering Group; and invites the Bishop to bring the matters referred to in paragraphs (c) and (d) above to the attention of the episcopal co-chairs of the Steering Group for its consideration.

The second day commenced with morning prayer, and the second session began with a Bible Study based on

'To build up the Body of Christ' 1Corinthians 12 v 1-30

and following this, Bishop David gave an overview of his long service as Bishop in this Diocese, and his reflections on how the key issues affecting the Church of England and its ecumenical partners are likely to proceed in the near-future, the title being 'The Universe Strikes Back'

His wide ranging, but coherent, address concentrated on the need to return to Christian theology, using St Francis of Assisi as an example of working with nature, caring for our common 'home', and that we need a spiritual transformation

He stressed that science and 'religion' share a moral precept, and that both owe future generations a beautiful, rich, diverse and healthy environment

For him, his service as bishop has been a joy, he will miss it, and the feeling of all present was that we will miss him equally

This was followed by two brief 'parish notices', one outlining how Women's Ministry in the Diocese is now supported in the Diocese, and the second reporting on the Archdeaconry participation in World Youth Day, held in Lisbon - the latter was illustrated by photos and videos

of the joyous ecumenical events which took place - who knew that the Archbishop of York was such a professional DJ as well?

The third session began with a presentation about the Anglican Church in Peru - a group of people from our Archdeaconry visited some of the worship centres around Lima and Arequipa - the Church appears to be flourishing notwithstanding the very apparent poverty, as was evident by some of the 'buildings' used for worship - the joy and generosity shown to our visitors during the visit was evident

This presentation was followed by a session on 'Our care for Creation' - this was led by the Archdeaconry Environmental Officer, who outlined the challenges faced by the Diocese and our Archdeaconry in meeting 'net-zero carbon footprint' by 2030 - several initiatives were outlined in which we might participate (including 'eco-church'!), but there is now a requirement to measure out carbon 'footprint' for travel by recording the mileage required for chaplaincies to function - how this data will be managed and interpreted is not yet clear, but we need to begin the process

The afternoon continued with four 'mini-sessions'

Readers led by Celia Paterson

The Rosary led by Rev'd Richard Seabrook

Meditation led by The Archdeacon

Treasurers led by Gwen Furmston

As chaplaincy treasurer, I attended the session for treasurers, which was probably not as forthright in its discussion than it might have been due to the presence of the Diocesan Chief of Operations, though some useful ideas were aired - what was apparent was the disjointed manner that finances were managed locally by some treasurers and that the 'job' of treasurer appeared to have a rapid turnover in some chaplaincies - there appears to be no consistent management of finance across the Archdeaconry (my view)

After these sessions, the Diocesan anti-bullying policy was introduced - this will be commented on by others, but it should be noted that for serious and on-line offences there already exists a system for dealing with this here in Spain

The second day ended with Holy Eucharist

The Building up of the Body of Christ

Presiding: The Ven David Waller

Preacher: The Rev'd Canon Frances Hiller

A retiring 'silent' collection was taken to support the work in the Diocese of Peru, as is tradition

Day three began with morning prayer followed by the Bible study

Lectio Divina – Led by Rev'd John Chapman

JOHN 17: 20 -26 (NRSV) and EPHESIANS 4: 1-6 (NRSV)

Traditionally, *Lectio Divina* has four separate steps: read; meditate; pray; contemplate - it has its roots in monastic practice

First a passage of Scripture is read, then its meaning is reflected upon - this is followed by prayer and contemplation on the Word of God

For me, it is very much the way in which we were encouraged to look at scripture during 'religious studies' at school

The day's keynote address was given by our Diocesan Bishop, and he enlarged on 'Walking together in Faith'

There followed presentation by Diocesan Staff

Andrew Caspari, Chief Operating Officer
Aiden Hargreaves Smith- Diocesan Registrar
Grace Fagan-Stewart - Diocesan Head of Safeguarding
Ruth Blanco - Communications

Each gave a brief overview of the work they did

There were time constraints which meant that the usual overview of Diocesan finance could not be presented, and was re-scheduled as a zoom meeting for Monday 12th of February

We still await Diocesan Share information

After the lunch break, the Spanish section business meeting took place - we are promised some basic guidance on appointment of legal representatives, but the meeting served to show how inconsistent management practice is across the Chaplaincy

The last session was the winding-up session in which the Archdeacon took us on a leisurely (from our point of view) walk along the French route of the Camino de Santiago

The next Synod will be online on 28th and 29th of January 2025

There followed Holy Eucharist presided over by Bishop David where the joyful admission of Diana as Reader took place, witnessed by many of her friends

Dinner was followed by clerical bingo and a time of saying farewell to Bishop David (the first of several across the Diocese)

This report gives a brief overview of the Synod - many of the presentations will be available as transcripts shortly for those who might like more detail