



CHAPLAINCY OF ALL SAINTS' MARSEILLE WITH AIX-EN-PROVENCE AND THE LUBERON

Newsletter – December 2020

Reflection from our Chaplain

A Christmas not like the others. We keep hearing those words - in news bulletins, on the lips of politicians, in conversations we have and messages we exchange. It won't be normal, it won't be the same, it won't be ... Around nine months ago, almost to the day, we stepped off the scale of anything we knew.

The strangeness of this time of pandemic has got to most of us at one time or another. Sometimes, for a few minutes or a few hours, we are able to forget what is going on. But then reality returns and there are times when, quite simply, it hurts. Separation, loneliness, aching loss - of loved ones, livelihoods, security, confidence - fear, illness, death. We switch on the news and wish we hadn't. Sometimes we switch it off.

Into all this comes a baby. Nine months, almost to the day, since his mother was told something extraordinary. That this birth would not be like the others. Stepping off the scale of anything she knew. Yet she did something equally extraordinary in return. She said yes. Let it be. And she moved forward in trust. She let the revelation of God within her become a source of hope, facing down everything that was strange. And she told her cousin, in words we recite in church two thousand years on, each day as evening falls: My soul magnifies the Lord. My deepest being proclaims trust in God.

Last week I was given a piece of yellowing paper, neatly typed. On the front cover it says: 'ALL SAINTS' CHURCH (Church of England) – CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT MASS December 25, 1944.' It's an order of service, led by two US Army Chaplains, from the first Christmas after the liberation of Marseille at the end of the War (which was the last time All Saints had to close because of events beyond anyone's control). It speaks of the hope of Christmas in the middle of disruption, the eternal message of peace in the middle of war. Reading it offers a timely reminder that there have been many Christmases not like the others, that each generation faces times of testing, in which a choice is given: to switch off, or to move forward in trust. As I looked at the piece of paper, it occurred to me that probably no one who took

part in that service was alive today. Yet their message of faith has been handed on to us. In the words of Thomas Cranmer's prayer, they 'so passed through things temporal that they finally lost not the things eternal'. When the strangeness and sadness of this year are gone, the faith and the hope and the love will remain.

As I write this, the wind is gusting down the valley, battering doors and windows. The candle in front of me flickers but does not go out. Another timely reminder. We carry the flame of faith into the future, perhaps especially in times of darkness. In our Christmas Gospel, we will hear again the assurance that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not and will not overcome it. And, despite everything that is going on, it will be a source of deep joy. Our task is to keep the flame alive in our own generation, and to hand it on.

The piece of yellowing paper ends: 'The Chaplains who serve this Church wish each one of you a blessed Christmas and a joyous one in the Name of the Child Jesus of Bethlehem'.

You couldn't put it better than that. Happy Christmas.

The Revd Jamie Johnston, Chaplain - December 2020

Chaplaincy Christmas Project

We are collecting donations to provide for 100 chickens for a food distribution project based near Grenfell Tower in London, through a charity with which a member of our chaplaincy works. The project has experienced a trebling of demand for its services during the pandemic. So far we have collected enough for 64 chickens (and therefore Christmas dinners) but we still need a few more. If you can donate, please:

- either send your gift via the JustGiving Page of the Diocese in Europe - <https://www.justgiving.com/diocese-ineurope> and add in where it says "message of support" that it is for the "Marseille Chaplaincy Christmas Project" (otherwise it'll head into the general coffers of the Diocese). If you can't find the place to put the message, please email us on anglican.marseille@gmail.com with details of your gift and we will make sure it is allocated to the Christmas project.

- or send your donation by bank transfer to:

Bank:	Barclays Bank plc
Sort Code:	20 06 13
Account number:	40317039
Account name:	Diocese in Europe Fund
Reference:	Marseille Xmas

Virtual Christmas Fair

Also we are still holding our annual Christmas Fair to raise funds for the ongoing work of the chaplaincy. As we are restricted by the Covid precautions and regulations, this year it's a virtual Fair, with a small but intrepid band of bakers, mulled wine makers, and jammers providing delicious products for Christmas. Last orders are now in but if you can get to church on Sunday in Marseille there will be some mince pies, cakes, jams, marmalades, mulled wine etc for you to buy and enjoy. So far we have raised over 500 euros so many thanks to all who are making or buying, and especially Gaston, Anne, Roxana, Elizabeth and Lydia for all their hard work in organising it.

Carol Service

Our carol service this year will be on-line, via zoom, at 4 pm French time on Sunday 20th December (3pm UK time) and we hope that as many of you as possible will be able to join us for Nine Lessons and Carols. You'll be able to sing as heartily or as quietly as you wish without the embarrassment of being over-heard as we are all muted on the screen! Whilst we wish we could be with friends and families but thanks to Covid restrictions are unable to meet up, we can at least join in with the millions of Christians world-wide in the much loved re-telling of the birth of Jesus in words and music.

Chaplaincy Council

The first meeting of the new Chaplaincy Council took place on 5th December and now comprises:

Chairman	Chaplain Jamie Johnston
Warden/Vice Chair	Jane Quarmby
Secretary	Muriel Teusink
Treasurer	Michael Annett
Safeguarding Officer	Christine Portman
Synod Reps	Christine Portman, Jane Quarmby
Electoral Roll Officer	Anne Roumieu
Seamen's mission	Gaston Roumieu
Oppède rep	Christopher Morgan
Marseille rep	Dimby Razafintsambaina
Curate (ex officio)	Roxana Tenea Teleman

Next meeting will be on 16th January 2021.

Brexit

The British Embassy in Paris have sent out a newsletter, *Voisins Voices*, containing useful information about the steps UK citizens need to take over the next few months in connection with Brexit. A copy is being circulated by email with this newsletter.

If you know of anyone who needs to take action about Brexit but may not have access to IT equipment, or may need help with the administrative steps involved, please let the Chaplain know so that we can arrange for them to receive appropriate assistance.

Dates for Diary

Sunday 20th December	10.00 Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille 11.30 Holy Communion via zoom 16.00 Nine Lessons and Carols via zoom
Wednesday 23rd December	22.00 Compline/Night Prayer via zoom
Thursday 24th December	23.30 Midnight Mass via zoom
Friday 25th December	10.00 Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille and via zoom (time to be confirmed)
Sunday 27th December	10.00 Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille 11.30 Holy Communion via zoom
Wednesday 30th December	22.00 Compline/Night Prayer via zoom
Sunday 3rd January 2021	10.00 Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille 11.30 Holy Communion via zoom
Wednesday 6th January	22.00 Compline/Night Prayer via zoom
Sunday 10th January	10.00 Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille 10.30 Holy Communion at Oppede 11.30 Holy Communion via zoom
Wednesday 13th January	22.00 Compline/Night Prayer via zoom
Sunday 17th January 2021	10.00 Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille 11.30 Holy Communion via zoom
Wednesday 20th January	22.00 Compline/Night Prayer via zoom
Sunday 24th January 2021	10.00 Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille 11.30 Holy Communion via zoom
Wednesday 27th January	22.00 Compline/Night Prayer via zoom

Sunday 31st January 2021

10.00 Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille

11.30 Holy Communion via zoom

We wish you all a happy Christmas, and a healthy and safe 2021.

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