

Newsletter October 2020

As we enter the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, our chaplaincy has been busy.....

Church services

We are continuing to hold services every Sunday morning at 10.00 am at All Saints' Marseille, and every 2nd Sunday of the month at 10.30 am at the church in Oppède. Thanks to our strict protocols we are able to continue in both churches despite the recent restrictions imposed for Marseille and elsewhere. The Aix congregation are taking it in turns to host services at home as we have not yet resumed services in the Oratoire. Our zoom services are continuing and being very well supported. We now have the church at All Saints' Marseille kitted out with wifi, so we can zoom services from there from this weekend.

Reader licensing

Our two readers, Christine Portman and Jane Quarmby, were re-licensed on Sunday, 27th September.



Covid measures

We have had new guidance from the Diocese on church use and the good news is that we can now have a small choir singing in our churches. The Luberon 'Voices' were therefore able to accompany the hymns at the last service in Oppède.

Much of our area of PACA is now a designated 'maximum alert' red zone, with a curfew in force from midnight on Friday, 23rd October for 6 weeks as cases rise. It is now obligatory to wear masks outside in Marseille, parts of Aix, Nice, Cannes and a number of other large towns. Bars remain closed in Marseille, though restaurants have reopened during the day with additional health measures in place. Our own protocols for personal attendance in church remain unchanged – wearing masks, using hand sanitizer, keeping distanced, signing the register, cleaning your space after use etc. We are continuing to monitor the position and, if new measures are brought in, we will circulate details.

Reflection

Our reflection this month comes from Rev Sue Goodwin and touches on the worry and uncertainty caused by the pandemic:

The Testing of our Faith

I don't know about you but I feel my faith is being well and truly tested through this Covid-19 pandemic which seems to be never ending. Testing is a normal part of our journey of faith and we won't know how strong our faith is until it has been tested. Every manufacturer knows that his products must be tested to see if they are 'fit for purpose'. Are they strong enough? Are they safe to use? Will they do the job they were designed for? The same is true of our faith. Is it strong enough to withstand temptation? Is it fit for purpose? Are we able to declare what we believe and stick to it?

The testing may come in many guises. We can become too busy and lose our focus on God. We can be drawn away to ungodly pursuits. We can get our priorities wrong and put family, or work or even ministry first. We may become sick and have our faith tested that way. We may panic over circumstances beyond our control. This pandemic is a prime example of that. We can be afraid of catching the virus or we fear for our jobs, loss of income and home, loss of status, fear of isolation. Faith is the counter balance to fear and in exercising our faith it becomes stronger and grows like a mustard seed. And we must never forget that our faith has an impact on others.

Our faith should show our confidence in God, His trustworthiness, the Rock on which we build. If you are anything like me, you may learn best the hard way. I learn more from my mistakes and failures than I do from my successes. Life may seem plain sailing to others but below the surface we may be paddling furiously just to stay afloat. There is no shame in admitting our struggles. Sometimes we may grind to a halt unable to move backwards or forwards and we simply have to wait for God to pick us up and move us on. Important in all of this is the community of faith, the church, the fellowship of believers. We all need a safe place to admit our fears and anxieties. A place where others will uphold us with their love, their prayers and their practical help till we are back on an even keel. In any community there will be those who are doing well, strong in faith, and those who are really struggling. That is why we need each other and need to be honest with each other. Galatians 6:2 says this: "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." This is beautifully illustrated in the Good News version of the Bible by a line on people walking one behind each other each supporting the burden the one in front of them is carrying.

What is the secret weapon to help us withstand the testing? In a recent reflection John talked of practical ways to help our faith grow:

- feeding on the Word of God
- celebrating our faith by looking back and seeing the faithfulness of God
- belonging to the community of faith
- serving others.

But the secret weapon to help us withstand the testing is JOY! It is the gift of joy given by the Holy Spirit. Nehemiah 8:10 says “the joy of the Lord is our strength”. And Peter talks of learning to rejoice in the face of adversity in his letter:

6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

Chaplaincy AGM

Due to the confinement we were unable to hold our AGM in the spring and it was rescheduled, initially to October but now again to (almost certainly) 21st November. It has been confirmed now that we can hold it via zoom. Any items for the agenda to Jane Quarmby please, before 4th November.

Our Chaplaincy's History

Part 5 – Reaching Out

From at least the early twentieth century the chaplaincy has included Aix-en-Provence within its ‘parish boundaries’, and in 1929 the chaplain reported that Aix was “the home of a few American artists and some five British families” whom he visited from time to time. However, in 1951, our young, go-getting post-war chaplain the Revd. Ronald “Ronnie” Noakes established a groundbreaking initiative, arranging for a student exchange between the Universities of London and Bristol with the University of Aix-Marseille. A year on, the year’s experiment proved highly successful, and the Revd. Noakes called, through the Church Times, for “incumbents in England [to] forward the names of those whom they knew to be going to Aix.” Armed with these introductions, Noakes was able to arrange meetings of the English students, and a large number of them became involved with the church choir and other activities. Two years later, Noakes’ successor, the Revd. Anthony Grain, was able to illustrate the wide scope of the work:

“We have a few British people living [in Montpellier] and also a number of others connected with the university – bright youngsters with plenty of truly British initiative. [...] Next day we had a very well attended Communion service, followed by an English breakfast (tea, eggs and bacon, toast and marmalade). Later I squeezed as many as possible into my car, and after visiting Aigues-Mortes (where Protestants were still imprisoned only 200 years ago), we picnicked in glorious sunshine on the beach of Saintes Marie-de-la-Mer, the traditional landing place of Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, with their servant Sara, on their expulsion from the Holy Land”.

In 1964, some thirteen years and five chaplains down the line, the chaplain reported that “work amongst American students at Aix is increasing” and that he was going there “roughly once a fortnight”. By then

the church was “well supported” by *au pair* girls and by Americans “and it is encouraging to see these young people both using the Church and being glad to find it here [...] on Thanksgiving we had forty at Mass”. Services were somewhat peripatetic, being held variously in the university chapel in term time, and in the chapel of the Catholic sisters of the Community of the Presentation during the academic holidays in the 1960s and 1970s. Around the turn of the century the Aix congregation found itself homeless, and a house church was started at the home of Valerie Aymar. However, by the 2000s we were able to start using the oratory chapel of the RC Cathedral of St. Sauveur once a month for our worship gatherings.

We seem to have founded daughter communities roughly once every 90 years, and in 2016 our then chaplain, the Revd. Canon David Greenwood, was delighted to receive an approach from Christopher Morgan to establish an Anglican congregation in the Luberon. Christopher publicised the venture, and permission was granted for monthly services to begin in Goult in 2017, soon moving to the Luberon congregation’s present adopted home in an RC church on the edge of the village of Oppède. This flourishing congregation, consisting mainly of British people with homes in the area, was originally under the wing of one of our assistant priests, the Revd. Malcolm Dodd, but was soon to be enriched by the presence of the Revd. John Smith, who conveniently lived close by. In due course the Revd. Smith was given Permission to Officiate (PTO) across the chaplaincy’s three worship centres, and in February 2018 the Luberon congregation was regularized and officially recognized by the Diocese of Europe as a daughter church in the Marseille chaplaincy.

As a result, the chaplaincy now consists of three very different congregations: in the bustling multicultural melting pot that is Marseille; in the university town of Aix-en-Provence where we have been able to welcome students and young families; and in the Luberon where the local expatriate community and their visitors enjoy the chance to gather for the time-honoured worship of the Anglican Church in the midst of their rural idyll.

In our next and final instalment in this series we will be looking at the way that, in true British stiff-upper-lip fashion, the chaplaincy “carries on carrying on” in the face of challenges.

Our thanks go to Amanda Haste for editing extracts of her history entitled ‘All Saints and Sailors’ for the purposes of this series.

Residency

Just a reminder to those needing to apply for residency that the French government portal has now opened online (a little later than 1st October but it is now working). We have until July 2021 to get our applications in. if you need to apply, go to the link <https://contacts-demarches.interieur.gouv.fr> and make your way to *brexit-demande-titre-sejour*. Don’t panic if your French is not perfect as at the bottom of the page is a British flag which when clicked will put the whole process into English. Do make sure that you read the table of documents needed and have them ready as files before you start the process.

Bishop’s Advent Appeal

Covid-19 Support to the Anglican Communion

Last week, we witnessed a deeply sobering point in our global struggle against Covid-19: over 1 million people worldwide have now died from the virus. We know and see the impacts of Covid-19 in our own

communities here in Europe, and the stresses and strains it brings for us all in our daily lives. We see, too, numbers of infections and deaths increasing once more among us, across the Diocese in Europe.

In Morocco (within our own Diocese) there have now been over 140,000 confirmed cases, and nearly 2,500 deaths. In South Africa, despite introducing one of the severest lockdowns in the world, over 685,000 cases have been recorded. In some areas of Africa, Covid-19 is exacerbating both ongoing violence, conflict and bloodshed and existing health crises, like tuberculosis. Lack of testing and data issues mean the real numbers in Africa may actually be far higher than those recorded. John Nkengasong from the Africa Centres for Disease Control told the BBC recently: "I don't think we are over the first wave yet, we have not yet hit the bottom at all."

In response to emergency needs right across the Communion, you may have seen that the Archbishop of Canterbury launched a Covid-19 "Together in Unity" Appeal. I am delighted that his Appeal has already raised over £100,000. My Advent Appeal this year is to urge your support for the work the Anglican Communion Fund is doing to alleviate the ravaging impact of Covid-19 in the poorest parts of the world. The Anglican Communion Fund (ACF) is making a difference on the ground to people who are suffering every day, the human cost of this pandemic.

Behind the statistics are human life stories of deprivation from lack of food, access to basic hygiene and sanitation facilities, and worsening economic hardship in the poorest communities for those unable to work. Below and attached are illustrated examples from ACF-supported projects in Sudan and Mexico. Where you have relationships with churches across the Communion, you will know of their situations, with first-hand reasons to support an Appeal to help those who have already lost so much and have least.



People queue for hot meals and food and essential supplies in Mexico City. Photo (The Anglican Church of Mexico provided by ACF)

I am delighted that, with your help, the diocese raised nearly £15,500 for my Advent Appeal 2019 to promote the empowerment of women in the Anglican Communion. I should add that ACF also provides key support to our own work representing the Anglican Communion in the European Institutions, on issues such as migration and refugees, human rights, freedom of expression and belief, and domestic violence against women.

Bishop Moses Zungu from Maridi Diocese in South Sudan expresses his gratitude for ACF's support, saying, "You held our hand during our most trying moments." I hope we in our diocese can help with an outstretched hand to brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion who are suffering so deeply right now from the impact of Covid-19, by supporting the work on the ground by the ACF.

Please give as generously as you can to this Advent Appeal. You can find details of how you can donate attached.

With every blessing,

+ Robert Gibraltar in Europe

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How you can donate to the Bishop in Europe's Advent Appeal 2020:

By cheque:

"Advent Appeal 2020"

Diocese in Europe Board of Finance Office

14, Tufton St

London SW1P 3QZ

By bank transfer:

Account number: 40317039

Sort code: 20-06-13

IBAN: GB16 BUKB 2006 1340 3170 39

Swiftbic: BUKBGB22

On the Diocese in Europe Just Giving page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/diocese-ineurope>

Remembrance

We have been told that there will be a small service of Remembrance at the War Cemetery in Marseille on November 7th. This date has still to be confirmed plus all of the arrangements so if you are interested in going, you will be very welcome but please contact Rev Jamie Johnston for more precise details.

Diary dates

Sunday 1st November All Saints Day

Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10.00 (Patronal Festival)

Holy Communion via zoom at 11.45

Wednesday 4th November Compline via zoom at 22.00

Sunday 8th November Remembrance Sunday

Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10.00

Holy Communion at Eglise Sacré-Coeur, Oppède at 10.30

Holy Communion via zoom at 11.30

Wednesday 11th November Compline via zoom at 22.00

Sunday 15th November Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10.00

Holy Communion via zoom at 11.30

Wednesday 18th November Compline via zoom at 22.00

Sunday 22nd November Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10.00

Holy Communion via zoom at 11.30

Wednesday 25th November Compline via zoom at 22.00

Sunday 29th November Advent Sunday

Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10.00

Holy Communion via zoom at 11.30

If anyone has any articles or news for this newsletter please send to anglican.marseille@gmail.com

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