

Report Archdeaconry Synod Representatives

In October 2019 we had our annual Archdeaconry Synod. The Synod has two 'Houses', a House of Clergy and a House of Laity. Francis and Barbara are members of the House of Clergy. Bala Joseph and Jan Waterschoot represent Trinity Church in the House of Laity.

The annual Synod is a meeting in which the chaplaincies get direct information and explication from the Bishop and the Archdeacon about Church matters. This might concern the Church of England as a whole or our Diocese in particular.

The Synod began with a 'Quiet Day', a day of reflection and prayers in which about 15 Synod members participated; for Trinity Jan took part in this. The reflection was about how to stay joyful in faith when life brings very big problems on your path.

The Bishop and Archdeacon were not the only ones to address the Synod. Michael Harvey spoke to us about 'Unlocking growth and creating a culture of invitation in your Church'. To make our Church grow we must invite people, but many Christians find that very difficult. Many Christians 'do Christianity' but forget that Jesus is at the heart of it all; they 'do Christianity' without Christ and the real call of God makes them feel very uncomfortable, out of their comfort zone. What should we do? Success lies in one person inviting one person and leave the rest to God. We must be as interested in the inviter as we are in the one being invited. Realise that God is leading the invitation.

Another address was by Andrew Caspari, the leader of the Diocesan Office in London. He explained the text of 'Walking together in Faith - a Strategy for the Diocese in Europe'.

According to the strategy we seek to build a common purpose throughout the Diocese by four points:

- Knowing ourselves as the beloved children of God
- Loving God and our neighbour and sharing the good news
- Generating a shared sense of direction in the power of the Holy Spirit
- Providing a focus for all that we do

We will work towards all this by:

- Building up the Body of Christ and fostering growth
- The evangelisation of Europe working together with other churches and agencies
- Striving for the creation of a just society and a sustainable environment
- Working for reconciliation
- Resourcing ministry

Beside all this Andrew informed us about the 'Common Fund' and about the (changing) formula that governs our contribution to that fund.

During one part of the Synod we were informed in a carousel over five stations about these subjects:

- Open Doors, about refugees
- Prison Ministry in Belgium (Licensed Lay Ministers working in prisons)
- The relationship of our Archdeaconry with the Diocese of Luweero in Uganda
- Pastoral outreach to Pakistani in Rotterdam
- A freshly started workgroup in Belgium about Christian resistance against climate change

During another part of the Synod Bishop Johan Bonny, RC Bishop of Antwerp, spoke to us about a welcoming church and the challenges traditional churches have dealing with a largely secularised world and with the influx of many Christians from other continents, although members of the same church.

Bishop Johan and our Bishop Robert were sent out on a mission together by Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin of Canterbury during a pilgrimage to Canterbury and Rome.

As ever Synod was very well organised, the information was good and well presented. Again also it was a very good opportunity to share experiences with people from other chaplaincies in our Archdeaconry.

Of course there was also a business meeting of our Deanery in The Netherlands.