

Report for APCM 2024 (Archdeaconry Synod)

St. Martha's and St. Mary's Anglican Church, Leuven

May 5, 2024

Prepared by: Karen Papellero

SOME KEY INFORMATION

I. General Purpose of Archdeaconry Synod and Values (established 2005, updated 2016)

Legal purpose:

- electing representatives;
- to conduct the business of the Archdeaconry.

In addition, we seek to:

- engage with the issues facing the Church of England and the broader Anglican Communion;
- be inspired, equipped and encouraged to further the mission of the church in our local ministry setting;
- stimulate ecumenical cooperation.

We aim to achieve these purposes by having an annual synod in which we:

- celebrate our corporate life and what God is doing among us;
- enjoy fellowship;
- worship;
- engage in discussion; and
- are enriched in ways which can be shared with our chaplaincies/ministry setting.

II. Synod programme

a. Quiet Day (day before the Synod) – prayer and reflection on the theme of “Home and Away.” It was led by the Revd Chris Nicholls, Assistant Chaplain in the Hague. We reflected on the balance between withdrawing to be with God and going out to engage with the world (mission).

b. Updates, reports and thematic sessions

Speakers:

1. Diocesan Bishop, the Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes
2. Key Diocesan Staff members:

- a. Communications Officer, Ruth Blanco
- b. Fundraising Advisor, Juliet Evans
- c. Dean of Women's Ministry, the Revd Canon Debbie Flach
- d. Diocesan Secretary/Chief Operating Officer, Andrew Caspari (online)

They shared with us about the significant work in and support of our Diocese in Europe. In addition, they kindly opened lines of communication to the chaplaincies who needed assistance in matters of communication, fundraising, training, and support of women clergy, and other challenges.

Moreover, there were additional special guest speakers who informed us on news in the following areas that very much connect with the Anglican Communion's and our Diocese's mission objectives. The main theme of the sessions centered on the following:

1. Conflict and Reconciliation

In light of the difficulties our troubled world and polarizing societies face, it is important, as Christians, to learn, reflect, and pray about how we can do more to bring peace in problematic situations and wounded relationships. Sue Haslehurst, a Training and Mediation Officer at Bridge Builders, a Christian foundation committed to transforming conflict, facilitated a helpful session and interactive workshop on how to equip ourselves with skills and knowledge to be better peacemakers.

2. Racial Justice, Living in Love and Faith, Youth Network, and Care for Creation

In the shorter afternoon sessions on Friday, October 6th, we also received key input and urgent call for continuing action and attention towards racial justice issues in the Diocese, from the Revd Augustine Nwaekwe; from the Revd Canon Stephen Murray on the developing Youth Network; from the Revd Louis Darrant on Living in Love and Faith; and Zélie Peppiette and our newly appointed Archdeaconry Environmental Officer, Peter Boers, on practical ways to Care for Creation.

- c. Business meetings**

- a. ACBL Business meeting (Deanery of Belgium and Luxembourg)
- b. Archdeaconry Business meeting

- III. Some personal reflection and insights**

Having been M&M's representative to the Archdeaconry Synod, I have found it to be a process and an event of gathering, reflecting, and encountering the Triune God anew in

the life and work of the Church of England, in the Diocese of Europe. It has allowed me to have a deeper look at the formal and/or functional aspects of being a church in the CofE, as well as into the Anglican Communion. I realized that participating in a synodal manner in the 'business' of the church is a **responsible participation** in the divine 'action' of salvation in the church. Finally, I think that the way the synod participants came together and engaged in formal and informal discussions is an important sign of what it means to be 'one in Christ', governed by the principle of unity in diversity. I have discovered every synod event to be a Spirit-filled, dynamic, multi-faceted experience.

/kp 02May2024