

Salisbury – Évreux Committee

Chair: Ven Paul Taylor

Secretary: Harold Stephens,
The Rectory, 17a, Edward Road,
Dorchester, DT1 2HL

harold.stephens627@btinternet.com

Phone: 01305 268434



Report on Visit by Diocesan Group from Évreux January 29th and 30th 2011.

Each year a diocesan group from Salisbury travels to Évreux or from Évreux to Salisbury as part of our on-going diocesan twinning with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Évreux in Normandy. This tries to coincide with the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.



This year we were able to welcome 8 members of the diocesan team from Normandy, led by Brother Jean-Yves Helaine, of the rural brothers based at the Priory of Canappeville south of Louviers. We also welcomed Sister Leo Joyce, a Dominican sister from Bernay (west of the diocese) and working as a parish worker in the benefice of Bernay.

The purpose of the visit was to share with our French friends the work of the Church in the wider community. To do this we based much of the programme in the Poole area and also in and around Dorchester. They were accompanied by members of our Twinning committee including the Archdeacons of Wilts and Sherborne.



During the Saturday we first visited Christ Church, Creekmoor. This modern building serves as a multi-function Church which also provides a range of services from traditional to informal. It is a "Local Ecumenical Project" shared with the URC, the Methodists and the Baptists. Relationships with the Roman Catholic Church are also strong. Especially through the work of St Edwards Roman Catholic and Church of England School. At Creekmoor, Rev Janice Audibert (assisted by her French husband, Jean) enthused about the place of

the church at the heart of the community. What excited the French visitors was the sheer diversity of what happens in the Church or is organised through or by the Church. Thus serving the whole range of needs and in close liaison with the health centre and other bodies, Christ Church has a much-respected place in the lives of the people of Creekmoor. The flexible uses for worship of the Church building was new to our French guests and had a considerable impression on all of our understandings of what it can mean to meet the varying needs of congregations.



Having been refreshed by the Church we all moved on to spend the late morning and lunch as guests of the RNLI training centre in the centre of Poole. This immense, modern and superbly appointed set of buildings and facilities serves the whole of the RNLI in Britain and Ireland. We were treated to a tour of the facilities including the deep-water training Poole, the £4 million simulation of a sea-going life boat heading (in our case) for a burring

tanker in the English Channel (“you may feel sick even though we are not actually moving!” said our guide) and the residential accommodation for those staying for the week-long training courses.



After an excellent lunch we moved on to Poole Hospital. Here the senior Chaplain, Canon Jane Lloyd, with the help of the Roman Catholic assistant chaplain, discussed the models of chaplaincy within the hospital setting. In a sense the hospital is her parish and all in it her parishioners. Provision for those of other faiths and of none is taken seriously although the chapel and chaplaincy team remain Christian.

The chaplain serves as pastor, as confidante, as prophet (speaking to the leadership of the hospital and its staff) and friend. The well-established chaplaincy at Poole is much valued by all – patients, families, staff – and plays an important part in the wider life of the hospital community.

Hospital chaplaincy does exist in France and many of their rôles are similar. However their opportunities to work alongside and leadership and management of hospitals are much more limited.

Later that afternoon we were welcomed at the HQ of Dorset Police at Winfrith. Here the co-ordinating chaplain for the Police, Rev Jean Saddington, outlined the origins of Police chaplaincy in Dorset (there are now 12 chaplains) and their model of working. Chaplains work with local stations and become a part of the teams working there. One chaplain described their work as a “ministry of Presence” – simply being around, a part of the life of a police station, its discussions and exchanges. They are available for individuals, for leaders, for times of personal and professional crises. Chaplains stand outside the formal welfare processes and, as such, work in



confidence where appropriate. Police chaplaincy does not exist in France, although military chaplaincy is well-established.

The group was largely accommodated in the Dorchester area and St. Mary's Church, Dorchester, hosted the evening meal and discussions in the Church Hall.

On Sunday morning the group assembled at St. Peter's, Parkstone for the Parish Eucharist at which Canon Professor Martyn Percy was the preacher. Lunch was shared at St Nicholas Church centre, Corfe Mullen. Here, again, is an example of a church which is equipped to be a multi-purpose building. The church is in constant use throughout the week as well as for worship on Sundays and other times. The Vicar, Rev. Pamela Walker, spoke with the group about the life of the church in the community locally. The meal, prepared by Colin Brady, the Social Responsibility Adviser for Churches Together in Dorset, who also talked of the focus for concern of the Churches in relation to social justice in Dorset. For the French group, this is familiar territory. The French Catholic Church has a considerable investment of time and effort in supporting the work of "Solidarité" (social justice and social concern). In the Diocese of Évreux each parish has members directly engaged in this area of work. At a diocesan level, a number of appointments exist to support the work with immigrants, rural deprivation and social exclusion.

The final visit was made by the group to the new Quiet Space, on the Poundbury town extension in Dorchester. The Quiet Space, sponsored by most of the Dorchester Churches will aim to offer a place of calm and tranquillity for everyone, unconditionally. Its warden designate, Rev, Dr, Geoff Turnock, described the aspirations of the Trustees and how close it is to realisation. The Quiet Space building is now constructed and internal fittings being installed. The Trustees hope the Quiet Space will open by Easter. The building awaits a date for its formal opening when church and town dignitaries, as well as residents of Poundbury and members of the churches will have a chance to find out about this unique, ecumenical venture.



After evening prayer, said in French and English, the visit ended with a meal at the home of the Archdeacon of Sherborne.

Conclusion

In a recent presentation to Diocesan Synod, the work of the Church in Normandy was described. We share many concerns and opportunities, even though we are of different countries and denominations. We serve largely rural dioceses; we provide the parochial system with a ministry to everyone in the diocese, not just to our signed-up members. Concerns about pastoral organisation and deployment of clergy tax the French even more than they do ourselves.

The experience of seeing the work of the church in the wider community at first hand left the French expressing their thanks for such an interesting, helpful and challenging time.

Harold Stephens
Secretary, Salisbury-Évreux
Committee.

