

16 February 2023

To the Clergy and People of the Diocese in Europe

Very soon we will embark on our Lenten journey once again. These are extraordinary times, with war continuing in Ukraine (the focus of our 2022 Appeal), and with unprecedented suffering in South East Türkiye and North West Syria as a result of recent earthquakes. The people of our diocese have been generous in responding to these huge needs, and certainly the people of Ukraine and Türkiye/Syria are very much in our prayers.

It has been the tradition for the Bishop's Lent Appeal to focus on a particular need *within* our diocesan family. We have pockets within the diocese where the reality is much more like the developing world than what is experienced in the comparatively rich north. One such area of the diocese is Morocco.

Many have now settled in the region of the capital, Rabat, where we have not had a permanent Church presence. Thanks to the vision of past chaplains in Casablanca and the dedication of a core of supporters in Rabat, a new congregation is being built up. **This year's Bishop's Lent Appeal is to support this congregation in the next crucial phase of its development.**

Archdeacon David Waller outlines below more details of this project:

A Church Extension Opportunity at Rabat

The Diocese is seeking to develop an independent new chaplaincy in Rabat, the capital city of the Kingdom of Morocco, and within the Archdeaconry of Gibraltar. Morocco is officially a Muslim country. His Majesty King Mohammed VI very graciously permits the Church of England to operate in his country ministering to the Anglican faithful from abroad. This new work in Rabat builds on this special permission.

The current congregation there is dedicated to St. Augustine of Hippo, an African saint, reflecting its largely African composition, and they use a beautiful modern chapel, kindly donated for our use by the local Catholic Archdiocese, with whom we have good ongoing ecumenical relationships. Cardinal Cristóbal López is a personal friend of the congregation.

For the last eight years St Augustine's has been a growing outreach project run from the long established Church of England Chaplaincy in Casablanca which is a two hour train journey away. The distance has meant that only a quick Sunday service can be provided. The needs of the Anglican Community in Rabat are now at the point when it is time for a new and exciting step in faith – independence within the diocesan family! The congregation is embarking boldly on the next phase which will be a resident priest to further build up St Augustine's.



Carey Duncan the Warden at Rabat writes:

“The prospect of having a permanent chaplain to support our worshipping community in Rabat is almost too exciting to grasp! On a superficial level, just the idea of being able to enjoy some leisurely fellowship after a service, instead of having to rush

to get the priest off on the next train home is a luxury. On a more serious level, having someone to take charge of pastoral care and help meet the needs of our congregation and to help grow it, would be such a blessing! Being able to celebrate the Eucharist on a regular basis would be such a treat. - something we will never take for granted again!”

To establish a resident chaplain’s post in Rabat we will need accommodation, a basic stipend and some associated costs of setting up and running this new venture. The Diocesan Mission Opportunities Fund has promised part funding for this project and we are hopeful that our previous mission relationship with USPG may also provide some financial support.

Even during the pandemic the successive chaplains from Casablanca did much good work in Rabat, caring for congregational members, and preaching the Gospel through action and word, but the distance prevented further development of such work. The congregation at St. Augustine’s is made up largely of people from sub-Saharan Africa along with a significant Filipino grouping and it is very much a ‘developing world’ Christian community, but within our own ‘developed world’ diocese. Generally speaking, the individuals and families have very modest means and many seek spiritual and material guidance from the Anglican Chaplaincy there in order to survive. This young, multinational community have great loyalty to the Church, but their financial capacity is very limited. Their needs of pastoral care and accompaniment, worship, teaching, advice, advocacy and community can best be offered by a resident priest.



The Lent Appeal is specifically aimed at helping the next step in the development of St. Augustine's by providing chaplain's accommodation, very much fitting in with our diocesan strategy encouraging a welcome of, and a working with, migrant communities often experiencing poverty.

As the Archdeacon has said, the appeal touches on several of the priorities of the diocese: building up the body of Christ, resourcing ministry, interfaith and ecumenical relations and ministry to migrant and refugee communities. Your gifts will help to establish a new congregation, extending the work of the Church, in a vibrant capital city, serving a young, international community, whose needs are great. I hope that the people of the diocese will support this appeal generously.

Donations can, as always, be given to the Diocese via your chaplaincy treasurer with the note 'Bishop's Lent Appeal'.

May our ever living God bless you this Lent, and give us hearts that look outward to the world and her peoples, and respond those in need with love.

Your brother in Christ

+ David

How you can donate to the Bishop in Europe's Lent Appeal 2023 :

By cheque:

"Advent Appeal 2022".
Diocese in Europe Board of Finance
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>

Or: via your Chaplaincy Treasurer to Nick Wraight in the Diocesan Office