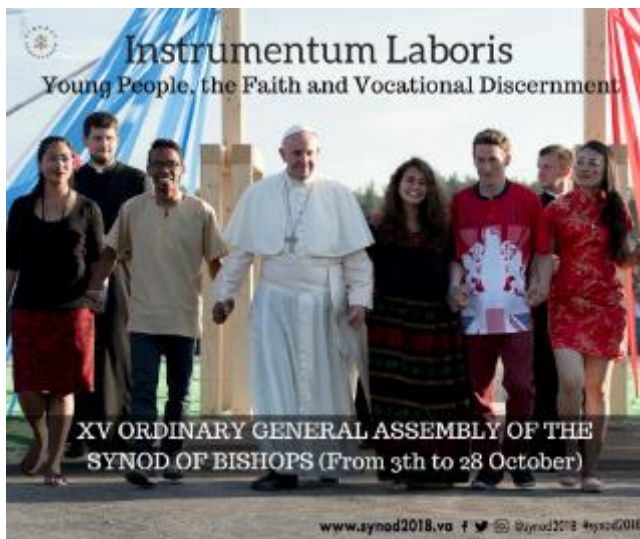


**November 2018**

**The Bridge No. 32**

**Newsletter of  
Ponte Sant`Angelo  
Methodist Church Rome**



**Young People, the Faith and  
Vocational Discernment**

## Minister`s Letter

Jesus was once asked by a rich young man: “Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And the answer he got was one that disappointed the young man. Jesus asked of him the most difficult thing of all – to give up all his wealth. And he couldn’t then respond. Francis of Assisi centuries later was able to do so, wholeheartedly, persuading many others to follow the Franciscan way of voluntary poverty.

This text from the gospels has been a key one in the Synod of Bishops I have been attending, along with many other texts where the Bible fixes our attention on young people and what they have to offer in service of God: of Moses and Samuel, of David and Jeremiah, all called and chosen by God when young. This Synod on ***Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*** (see the fuller report below on what it’s all about), has enabled the Catholic Church to address certain key issues that affect other churches too, challenged by cases of sexual abuse by clergy and the drain of young people from our churches. We’ve heard how, like the rich young ruler, many of the young are put off by the institutional church or lured away in this digital age by a preoccupation with social media and entertainment, the attractions of a throw away culture of casual relationships and disposable resources, the attractions of acquisitiveness and the perceived need of possessions or the latest gadgets and fashions promoted by advertisement, or addictions to drink and drugs and pornography. Sometimes the Church has put them off with their judgemental attitudes and less than loving treatment.

It’s easy of course to think ill of the young and to see them as a challenge to the values of the older generation. The way they behave, and dress, and drop out of what the rest of society thinks of as norms. But, as we have often heard in the Synod, there are many young people who yearn for spiritual values to guide them in their lifestyle. There are many committed to working for peace and justice in God’s world out of love for Jesus who is their role model for a better life for themselves and others. They have a desire to share this good news with others. They are agents of evangelisation in schools and colleges and universities in their networks of care and compassion.

So we need to listen to them rather than to lecture. We need to accompany them on their spiritual journeys, whether in family or in the church. We need to be able to allow them to participate fully in the life of the Church.

There are those who have a vocation to teach the young and they are pillars of the church handing on Christian values. But it is part of a wider vocation to holiness and to love of Christ that all of us share and exercise in many different ways. How then do we attract more children and young people to be part of our fellowship and family of the Church? Through our love and service in faithful discipleship of the Christ who says: "Follow me".

**Pastor Tim**

## **INTERN NEWS**

The last few weeks have gone by in a blur and haze of new people, new places and new opportunities. Through the gradual repetition of the week, and setting up new routines of work and rest, I am beginning to feel at home here. Particular highlights so far include starting an Italian language course on Tuesday evenings, which I am finding equally challenging and enjoyable, attending various talks at the Lay Centre and the Augustinianum, and following reports from the Synod of Bishops on **Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment**. Within the busyness of moving to Rome and all the excitement it offers, it is easy to forget to reflect on God's vision and purpose for this year. Through regular attendance at communion at the Anglican Centre, Bible Studies at All Saints and volunteering at Sant'Egidio, I find opportunities for prayer, study and fellowship which act as an anchor within the busy working week.

One particularly moving talk was held at the Lay Centre and called '**Who is my Neighbour?**', led by Fr. Aloysius Mowe, International Director of Advocacy and Communications for the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). Through the story of the Good Samaritan, and drawing on the wisdom of Fred Rogers (the American minister/TV personality), Fr. Aloysius drew on the idea that love is an active noun and is not limited to geography. He discussed Biblical

examples of both exile willed by God and God acting through forced exile. In reference to issues of migration today, Fr. Aloysius spoke about reframing the phrase, 'refugee crisis' as a 'crisis of solidarity', where both an individual and collective response is needed, to actively show love towards our neighbours, particularly those in need of safety and protection. Fr. Aloysius acknowledged that we can feel powerless at times to make a difference, and referred to JRS's campaign, called #Do1Thing, demonstrating ordinary people taking one action, one form of support, to show solidarity with our neighbours. The talk concluded with a time of prayer and reflection. We read Josepha's prayer during this time. Josepha is a Cameroonian woman who was rescued by the aid group, Proactiva Open Arms, after being left behind at sea by Libya's coast guard. Her prayer was published by *Avvenire* on October 11th and the final few lines show the difference that people can make when they choose to show solidarity and actively love.

*'Here I am with people with a big heart.*

*They are taking care of me.*

*I never met people like this before in all my life'*

I also went to a talk attended by Pope Francis on intergenerational dialogue, focusing on his new book, **'Sharing the Wisdom of Time'**, which contains over 30 stories from around the world on the theme of sharing the wisdom of elders. An important concept being discussed in the Synod of Bishops is the idea of 'accompaniment' and Pope Francis spoke about how there should be an alliance between young and old people, and how the dreams of older generations will go on to inspire young people as they envision a future.

Next week, I return to the U.K. for the first residential of the internship. I am looking forward to seeing the other interns and sharing our different experiences so far. I will also have the opportunity to briefly visit Walsall and spend some time with my family.

**Rachel**

### **CHURCH FAMILY NEWS:**

Alemneh and Emebat Dejene will be leaving us shortly as Alemneh has been successful in his application to work for World Vision US. He has already taken up his post as Senior Technical Advisor, Agriculture and Natural Resources Management. We hope there will be an opportunity to say farewell when he is next back in Rome.

We have been glad to welcome Jerry and Lisa Horner with their three daughters, Alessandra, Genevieve and Freya.

### **CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT:**

The Church Council has met twice recently in the Methodist Centre on the fifth floor after service. The following are members: Sandra Mi, Marcello Marinelli, Evelyn Kalaw, Arosh de Mel, Mary Owusu, Gladys Annan, Alessia and Federico Milani/Montelli. **The next meeting will be on December 9<sup>th</sup>**

We talked about how we might be a welcoming church and identified how we were achieving this and what we might do to improve our outreach. Part of this is through the use of social media. Rachel reported on our current presence on social media: Facebook: 102 likes, MEOR Twitter: 120 Followers, PSA Twitter: 82 Followers. Information about following PSA on social media has been added to Order of Services and Bridge. If you use any of these platforms, please consider following us! Marcello reported on work in the kitchen to provide space for a dishwasher and extra storage facilities.

### **A MESSAGE FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

After the long summer break, Sunday School classes have started up again during Sunday morning worship. Every year we find ourselves catering for rather different age groups and this year we seem to have children who are in junior and middle school as well as little ones, so somewhat of a challenge. As you may be aware, the law in a number of countries now requires two adults to be present at any one time when supervising children. This is very hard for us to arrange and we do not always manage it. It is also important that the Sunday School teachers have an opportunity to stay in church and hear the sermon as often as they can. Do let us know if you would like to join us

upstairs with the children, even once or twice a year – no previous experience required! I am sure you will be surprised to see how bright and enthusiastic they are and you may even enjoy the lesson too! Lastly, please remember that Sunday School teaching is not exclusive to women. We would love to have some volunteers among the male members of our congregation. Please speak to Angela, Rachel or Sandra.

## **REPORT ON THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS PART 1**

### **General Comments:**

A gathering of over 250 Catholic bishops, archbishops and cardinals, the Synod of Bishops, was convened in Rome by Pope Francis on the theme of **Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment**. In addition to the ordained priests and religious/consecrated meeting in the Paul VI Synod Hall, there were a number of experts and lay people including a small but significant number of young people (between the ages of 16 and 29) who, together with the eight Fraternal Delegates as ecumenical observers (5 Protestant and 3 Orthodox) who had a voice but not a vote, but were able to join in the discussions to advise Pope Francis on the chosen topic.

It started with a mass in St. Peter`s Square on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October and ended with the singing of the Te Deum and approval of the final document on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October. It worked most days in two sessions, morning and late afternoon, lasting six hours each day.

The working method chosen was to present at the beginning a report (the *Instrumentum Laboris* - IL) drawn up by the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops as a result of a questionnaire sent to all Bishops Conferences throughout the world, an online survey accessed by over 10,000 young people, and a pre-Synod consultation last March which produced a document which formed a substantial part of the IL.

The Synod Fathers and all others were given the opportunity to speak in the plenary sessions for a maximum of four minutes in an intervention of their choice on particular parts off the IL or general points they wished to raise. In addition there were a number of occasions when free interventions could be

made. Pride of place was given to the young auditors to make a presentation at the beginning of each of the three parts of the IL.



These followed a pattern set by a key reading of the Emmaus Road story:

- Recognizing: the Church listens to reality
- Interpreting: Faith and Vocational Discernment
- Choosing: Paths of Pastoral and Missionary conversion

Each day started and ended with prayer – more formally in plenary sessions, and more informally in the groups. A small singing ensemble led the gathering in simple hymns, and psalms (sung to plainchant in Latin) and a reading and short homily (in Latin and the chosen language of the preacher). All plenary sessions were simultaneously translated into six languages (English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish).

The small groups were self-selected according to these languages. Most of the groups therefore had a number of persons from different parts of Africa, Asia and other parts of Europe. My group, Anglicus B, had participants from the UK, US and Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Malaysia and the Philippines, India, Poland, West and East Africa. We methodically went through each part of the IL and made suggested amendments and additions in the form of modi which had to be voted on at the end of each session by the Synod Fathers. A member of the group, under the chairmanship of Cardinal Cupich, Bishop Mark Edwards reported back in the plenary session at the end of each part a summary of our deliberations. Part 2 summary of the proceedings will appear in the next issue.

## GUARDIA PIEMONTESE

The name of this town in English would be something like “Piedmonts’ Lookout Tower”. It is located 55 km northwest of Cosenza, at the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea. The name refers to the Piedmontese immigrants who have settled here since the 14th century. One of the best known immigrants to us



is Gian Luigi Pascale, who was a Waldensian pastor. On one of the outer walls of our church building in the Via di Banco di Spirito Santo is a memorial stone for Pascale, who was executed for being a heretic in front of Castel San Angelo in September 1560.

With a group of the United Reformed Church Waldensian Fellowship, Ann Chaplin, my wife Sonneke and myself made a trip this summer to visit Waldensian Churches and settlements in Calabria and Apulia. Guardia Piemontese does not have a Waldensian Church any more as the city was destroyed and great part of the population either murdered or imprisoned by Spanish troops in June 1561.

Towards the end of the last century, the current inhabitants of Guardia Piemontese wanted to establish a cultural centre, where they could show the history of their town, in particular what they had inherited from their Piedmontese ancestors. They requested support from the Otto Pro Mille funds, which was granted by the Waldensian Church. Thus today they have a museum, which retraces the history of the Waldensian movement from its origins to the present day; there is a laboratory where they produce the same fabrics and dresses from their ancestors, as in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and there is a library with all the books related to their past. All the streets have names of famous ancestors or people related to the Waldensian cause. There is even a Via Giovanni Calvino, which maybe the only one in the whole of Italy. One of



the original languages from the north of Italy and the south of France  
“Occitan” is still spoken by a number of people.

The whole project of the Cultural Centre, Museum, Laboratory and Library is a great promotion of the Waldensian Church in Italy and worth a visit. As it is stated on the website ([www.valdesidicalabria.org/](http://www.valdesidicalabria.org/)): “The Cultural Centre Gian Luigi Pascale is engaged in the dissemination of the history of the Waldensians of Calabria in order to develop a contemporary reflection on the importance of freedom of faith, on the fundamental concept of state secularism and on the acceptance of differences. History (even the recent one) teaches us that so many rights and freedoms we enjoy today, have been ‘the object of conquest’ and this should never be forgotten”. As this is such an enterprising community, one day there maybe even be a new “Chiesa Valdese”.

**Marius de Gaay Fortman**

#### **NOVEMBER OPEN GARDEN DAYS**

##### ***A message from Rose Wentz at the Ecumenical Garden***

The next Open Days are 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November. Remember we are on our Fall/Winter schedule so the times are 10am to 1pm. If the weather is very rainy, I will send out a cancellation notice. You can always contact me if you are not sure if the garden will be open. Right now we are working on planting winter crops in the vegetable garden and doing Fall clean-up. We also need to clean the sidewalks as they are getting slippery. If anyone has a power washer that we can borrow let me know.

**Rose Wentz 327 075 1908**

#### **VISITING PREACHERS this autumn**

11 <sup>th</sup> November	Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, Vice Moderator of the World Council of Churches
2 <sup>nd</sup> December	Communion with Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah preaching

**Brief bio: Mary Ann Swenson** is an American and Bishop of the United Methodist Church. Mary Ann was ordained to the ministry by the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (UMC) in 1973. Swenson also served as senior pastor of First United Methodist Church, Wenatchee, Washington from 1989 to 1992. While a pastor in Wenatchee, she also served as president of both the Board of Directors of the Rape Crisis and Domestic Violence Center, and on the Board of Directors of the North Central Washington AIDS Coalition from 1989 to 1992. Swenson was elected to the episcopacy of the United Methodist Church by the 1992 Western Jurisdictional Conference. She now serves as president of the church's General Commission on Christian Unity and Inter-religious Concerns (GCCUIC). Since the last World Council of Churches Assembly, Mary Ann has served as vice moderator and a member of the central committee. She met Pope Francis at his visit to WCC headquarters in Geneva in June 2018 to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the WCC.

On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, we also have a visiting preacher whose details are below:

**Brief bio: The Reverend Doctor Casely B. Essamuah** serves as Secretary to the Global Christian Forum. In this role which he assumed on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, he offers executive and servant Leadership to a platform that enables encounter between and among churches that confess Jesus Christ as fully human and fully divine, and that recognizes and accepts God as revealed in the Trinity. The primary Pillars of the Global Christian Forum are the following: The Roman Catholic Church through the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, The Pentecostal World Fellowship, the World Evangelical Alliance and the World Council of Churches.

At the GCF table these organizations offer each other and others a safe and precious space for encounter, prayer and faith sharing.

Previously in the last 20 years, Dr Essamuah served as Global Missions Pastor for Park Street Church, Boston and Bay Area Community Church, Annapolis, MD. He facilitated those churches Global engagements that included partnerships worth millions of dollars, and involving thousands of short term

and vocational missionaries. A few of the projects were church planting, leadership development, youth evangelism, HIV-AIDS ministries, orphanages, medical missions and others.

Originally from Ghana, West Africa, he holds a master's degree from Harvard Divinity School and a doctorate from Boston University.

Dr Essamuah also serves as Secretary to the World Relief board and as Synod Secretary to the North America Mission Diocese of the Methodist Church Ghana, which has 50 churches in Canada and the United States.

### **BIBLE STUDY HOME GROUP**

The Bible Study home group continues on 10<sup>th</sup> November. We meet on Saturdays at 5.30 pm and are studying the Book of Acts.

**Details:** Mobile 338/1675680 - Via del Casaletto 63 - Buzz Montelli – Milani (Monteverde area)

**Following dates:** 24<sup>th</sup> November, 15<sup>th</sup> December.



### **DATES FOR THE DIARY**

On November 11<sup>th</sup> (the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of the First World War) there will be a special event at All Saints featuring words and music for remembrance at 6:30pm. Please make this known and encourage others to come.

### **FORTHCOMING SERVICES**

<b>November 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Pastor Tim and Bishop Mary Ann Swenson</b>
<b>November 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Pastor Tim</b>
<b>November 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Pastor Tim</b>
<b>December 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Pastor Tim – Advent Sunday Communion. Guest preacher Reverend Dr Casely Essamuah, General Secretary of the Global Christian Forum.</b>

**Weekly Offerings** [P =cash; E =Envelopes; BB = Birthday Basket.]

**Totals**

Sept P 567,50 E 1,995 (BB 130,00) TTL 2,692.50

Oct P 499,25 E1,678 (BB 70) TTL 2247,25

Received for All We Can 439,15 euros



They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn

At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them.



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