

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

The Suffragan Bishop
The Right Reverend David Hamid



A Statement from Bishops Dr. Robert Innes and David Hamid on the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, Gibraltar

The main focus of the work of the Dean is as pastor and parish priest serving the Cathedral and community in Gibraltar. This is adequately summarised in the profile and role description. These are supplementary notes to complement the rest of the paperwork in the vacancy pack.

Diocese

The Dean is an *ex officio* member of the Diocesan Synod (which meets residentially for 3 – 4 days, once a year) and of the Bishop's Council (which has a two-day meeting, once a year). All members of the Bishop's Council are Directors of the Diocesan Board of Finance. The Dean is traditionally understood to be the "senior priest" among the diocesan clergy. There are aspects to the office of Dean and the role of the Cathedral and the Diocesan Chapter which are governed by the Cathedral Statutes, 1997. These particular duties and opportunities of the Cathedral are mentioned in the statutes:

"It is a physical sign of the unity of the people of the Diocese with their Bishop and with one another; it is a place in which the festivals of the Church and important events and anniversaries in the life of the Diocese are celebrated by the Bishop or on his behalf; it is a place for regular prayer for the bishops, clergy and people of the Diocese, and for the communities in which they live."

There are two pro-Cathedrals, one in Malta, and one in Brussels, each led by a "Chancellor". The Pro-Cathedrals complement the ministry of the Cathedral in being regional signs of the unity of the Diocese and in this way share in the work of the Cathedral. There is a proposal to review the role of the Cathedral and Pro-Cathedrals and the Dean will be expected to participate in this review. The Dean is a member of the Cathedral Chapter of the Diocese, chairing the same in the absence of the Bishop. For those canons with stalls, these stalls are dispersed among the Cathedral and Pro-Cathedrals.

The principal focus of the Dean's ministry is as incumbent of the Cathedral parish, with all that the day to day pastoral and liturgical work of the Cathedral entails. The bishops may invite the Dean to hold a particular brief within the diocese, but this will be able to be led from Gibraltar itself and will be consonant with and enhance the Dean's ministry within the context of the territory as well.

Archdeaconry

The Cathedral is also part of the Archdeaconry of Gibraltar, comprising Spain (including the Canary and Balearic Islands), Portugal (including Madeira), Andorra, Morocco as well as Gibraltar itself. The Dean is required to participate, along with the lay representatives, in the life of the Archdeaconry. There is an annual meeting of the Archdeaconry Synod, now linked with a meeting of the clergy chapter, which is usually residential over a total period of 4 – 5 days. The Interim Archdeacon of Gibraltar is the Venerable Geoff Johnston. The Archdeaconry of Gibraltar, in a recent survey of the clergy, rated very highly in terms of general clergy well-being.

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In the diocese either the Diocesan Bishop or the Suffragan Bishop is lead bishop for a given archdeaconry, providing pastoral care for the clergy and congregations, oversight of routine vacancy and appointment processes, care of title curates, consultation with mission agencies, strategic direction, mission planning and new initiatives. The Suffragan Bishop in Europe is the lead bishop for the Archdeaconry of Gibraltar.

Civic context

The Dean has a place on the Table of Precedence in the territory and is expected to attend certain Government and / or civic functions and events in representation of the Church. On occasions, if required, the Dean would be consulted by the Government on matters of a social or religious topic touching upon the Gibraltarian community as a whole. As a religious leader the Dean has a key role in promoting inter-faith cohesion. Faith is still very much at the heart of the community, so the Dean's involvement, not only at official ceremonies such as Remembrance Day, but also at community occasions such as music festivals and charity events, will be warmly received and appreciated. It will be important for the Dean to be seen to be immersed in community life, as a genial, hands-on, supportive presence.

Ecumenical Context

The Diocese in Europe has a particular ecumenical vocation on the continent and our priests are key to carrying out this vocation. The diocesan guidelines and regulations state that the Diocese in Europe seeks "to minister and engage in mission in partnership with other Churches especially the historic Churches of the countries in which we live". 90% of Christians in Gibraltar are Roman Catholic. There is a Roman Catholic bishop resident in the territory with whom the Cathedral has excellent relations, as well as with the diocesan clergy. The shrine of Our Lady of Europe is at the southernmost tip of the territory. There are also Methodist and Church of Scotland parishes in Gibraltar with whom there are also warm relations.

Interfaith relations

For centuries, Gibraltar has been a religious melting pot. The extensive Jewish community arrived in the early 1700s. There are several synagogues, including one close to the Cathedral itself. Hindu traders and merchants form an important part of the population, and there is a Hindu temple in the territory. The Muslim community is about 7% of the local population with the majority of Moroccan origin but others of Asian. There are 2 mosques including a new one at the southernmost point close to the shrine of Our Lady. Gibraltar is a model of tolerance, harmony, respect and understanding among the major world faiths.

Ministry resources

There is one priest with Permission to Officiate, who also holds the title of "Canon Theologian". There are two licensed Readers. The Port Chaplain's post is currently vacant, and this is combined with part-time duties at the Cathedral. The Dean appoints the Port Chaplain, in consultation with the Bishop.

Ministry challenges

Among the greatest challenges will be to continue the work of healing among members of the congregation, following some sadness (and some puzzlement) at the departure of the previous Dean, who took early retirement due to ill health. Some re-invigorating of voluntary groups and strengthening of the general sense of ownership among the faithful, of the Cathedral's life and mission will be paramount. There are some individuals and families that have distanced themselves from the Cathedral, and it will be important to invite them to return and be part of the building a vision for the future.

The King's Chapel, the military chaplaincy, located just about 200 metres away, is scheduled to stop hosting regular Sunday services in November. There may be a chaplain appointed to serve the pastoral needs of the few remaining military families but based at the Four Corners/Devil's Camp. That chaplain, if appointed, may be RC or Free Church, of course. If an Anglican, it will be important to find a way for him or her to make a contribution to Cathedral life and ministry.

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The Dean will have a key role in welcoming Anglicans who were habitual attenders at the King's Chapel to make their home at the Cathedral. Following the closure of the King's Chapel, the Cathedral will assume the responsibility of hosting some of the key annual military services, such as Trafalgar and Battle of Britain commemorations. There needs to be an exploration about the viability of a Sunday School and work with young persons. There is scope for the development of the profile of the Cathedral in the territory, making it a vital part of Gibraltar civic, cultural, musical, artistic as well as spiritual life.

Worshipping life

The worship is Eucharistic, mostly Common Worship. Vestments are worn and incense used at major feasts. The hymnody is quite standard. The organ was recently restored, and there is a voluntary choir and an enthusiastic and competent servers' guild. The Eucharist is celebrated and the Offices said daily.