



THE OLIVE BRANCH

PENTECOST 2026

The Fruit of the Spirit is Peace

Since the last edition of Olive Branch, sent out earlier in February, The United States and Israel launched an attack on Iran, which has become a wider war impacting most of the countries that make up our Diocese and having a direct impact on congregational life. With the continuing blockade of the Straits of Hormuz those most directly affected are seafarers, caught in a traffic jam of over 1000 ships, highlighted by the Rev'd John Attenborough, Mission to Seafarers' Regional Manager for the Middle East and South Asia, in a recent interview. Supplies of food and water are



running dangerously low for the estimated 50,000 seafarers on board. Desalination plants are unable to run when stationary, so ships are reliant on supply vessels, but delivering supplies under current conditions is a significant logistical challenge; there is also the stress and anxiety of their circumstances.

The worst affected are the crews onboard the fourteen vessels already abandoned by their owners. With no salaries and depleted supplies crew members are reliant on Mission to Seafarers.



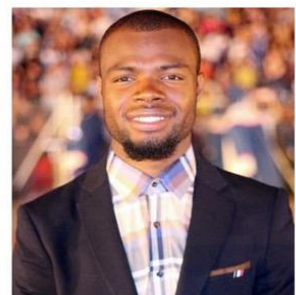
Do pray for MtS Chaplains in their vital work.

Vocations Sunday



Despite living under the threat of war, several congregations held a Vocations Day over the weekend of the Fourth Sunday of Easter. In Epiphany Church, Doha, the team of ordained and those exploring ordained and lay ministry all robed and took part in the service, at which over four hundred people attended.

Two people following through their vocation to ministry are Henry Ikediego, who has served at St Mark's, Famagusta in various ways as lay caretaker and administrator over ten years; and the Rev'd Maria Evangelou who, as well as serving at the St Paul's Cathedral, is the Community Outreach Co-ordinator in the Archdeaconry of Cyprus.



Henry will be ordained Deacon by Bishop Sean at St Mark's on Saturday 6th June and Maria will be ordained priest at St Paul's Cathedral on Saturday 5th September.

Friends' Gathering in Exeter

Arriving at the gate to the Bishop's Palace on Tuesday March 24th, the twenty-one Friends



were directed to the house and its lovely reception room with a magnificent log fire! After morning coffee or tea, Bishop Mike, Bishop of Exeter, warmly welcomed us, introducing Katie Drew and the Rev'd Sarah Mounoury, who have been tasked with developing Exeter's tripartite Link with the Anglican Dioceses of Cyprus and the Gulf and Thika in Kenya, as well as their links with Melanesia and Bayeux. Bishop Mike gave an informative and entertaining talk about the history of the Palace and some of his more colourful predecessors, and then invited us to explore some of the palace and the beautiful gardens that surround it before gathering in the Bishop's Chapel for an uplifting Eucharist. The chapel is small making the service even more intimate.

A lovely buffet lunch gave an opportunity to catch up with one another; afterwards we split into two parties to explore the Cathedral and a fascinating guided tour of the Treasury. We finished with a cup of tea back in the Bishop's Palace and were sent on our way with the blessing of Bishop Mike.

As the Friends, it was good to re-establish the link with Exeter Diocese, and everyone said what a memorable day it had been. The Friends extended their warm thanks to Bishop Mike for his generous hospitality, and to all who contributed to making the day so enriching and enjoyable.

Parish priest for Limassol

Following the return of the Rev'd Deborah Moorgas to South Africa, St Barnabas, Limassol looks forward to the arrival of a new parish priest. The Rev'd George Vidiakin, Regina and their two children are no strangers to Limassol,



George having served as priest to the Russian Orthodox community before his journey to the Anglican Church. He has served as an Assistant Curate in St Helena's, Larnaca before being appointed as Priest of Christ Church Ayia Napa.

George writes: *'I am looking forward to my new ministry. St Barnabas' church is a very vibrant, thriving and growing community.'*

Dates for your Diary

The **AGM of the Friends** preceded by a Eucharist is set for *Monday 27th July 2026*, in All Hallows by the Tower, London. Bishop Sean plans to be with us.



Northern Gathering of Friends in York: *Wednesday 21st October 2026*

Zoom Prayer meetings for the Diocese:
Thursday 21st May 2.00pm
Thursday 24th September 2.00pm

There is also daily Evening Prayer from St Christopher's Cathedral, Bahrain.

For regular news and information about the Diocese and to find the Prayer Diary, look up the Diocese's website: cypgulf.org