



# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION of CIVIL AVIATION CHAPLAINS

March/April 2016 Newsletter

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

One of the many good things I have discovered since becoming IACAC President last October is the high esteem in which the International Association is widely held. This is, I'm sure, an indication of the regard, which our airport colleagues have for the work of their own chaplaincies, and is a credit to the relationships that individual chaplains have built up around their airports over many years.

Nevertheless, it is still great to hear from Airport management and staff how much they value their chaplaincy. This was particularly clear in February, during the Exec Board's meeting in Paris, when almost every member of senior management of Aéroports de Paris (and at Charles de Gaulle and Orly Airports) made time to meet us and to express their excitement at our forthcoming conference in August 2016. It is clear that though the initiative may have originally come from the Paris chaplaincies, Aéroports de Paris have responded with great enthusiasm and with a desire to make the most of the presence of IACAC members from around the world in Paris for five days.

This enthusiasm was something of a surprise to me (an Englishman!) - knowing something of the French principle of "laïcité" (akin to the strict separation of Church and State in the USA). However, it is clear that a strictly secular state does not imply a lack of respect for people and communities of faith or a lack of intelligent and positive engagement with issues of faith, culture and religion.

We are already looking forward to an exciting conference and the creative engagement not just of the airports, but also of the city and people of Paris. Every world city is now a 'melting pot' of cultures, and airports all around the world are a microcosm of "the global village" with its tremendous diversity and global interaction. The title of the 2016 Paris Conference is: **"Airports: human, cultural and religious crossroads"** (\*«Aéroports: carrefours humains, culturels et religieux»\*) - a recognition by Aéroports de Paris of **\*both\*** the need for genuine human, cultural and inter-religious engagement **\*and\*** of the value of airport chaplaincies in addressing these needs. **BOOKINGS ARE NOW OPEN** (read about the discounts available elsewhere – and at **\*www.iacac.info\*** <http://www.iacac.info>!).

The recent terrorist attacks in Brussels (and last year, in Paris) have highlighted the need - not just for

heightened security and enhanced anti-terrorist measures, but for ever greater solidarity and understanding between our diverse cultures and faith communities. The same is, of course, also true for the many other communities around the world that have suffered similar violence in recent months (Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Libya, France, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia, Somalia, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Pakistan...) The popular response to these attacks on the streets of Paris and Brussels has, thankfully, been one of solidarity and unity - rather than the scapegoating of one religion or nationality - and has revealed a widespread appreciation that the vast majority of adherents of all faiths are peace-loving and want to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live and work.

Of course, it is also recognised that there are (as there are among all faiths, ideologies and philosophies) small minorities corrupted by violence and hatred. Airports can't solve the world's problems alone – but the value of airport chaplaincies in promoting human, cultural and inter-religious engagement and understanding is significant.

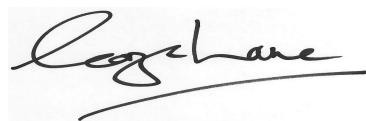
It is gratifying that this value is being celebrated by the city and airports of Paris. Please, if you possibly can, do join us for this globally significant five-day meeting. One of the elements of meeting together that chaplains regularly say is most valued is the opportunity to hear one another's experiences and to learn from one another. However good our outside speakers are (and we have had some fantastic speakers in recent years!), it would be fair to say that the greatest experts on airport chaplaincy ministry are those sitting around us in the conference room (and sadly, sometimes, those unable to be present). The Exec Board discussed this in February and has committed to ensuring that there is increasing space during conferences for us to share with (and to hear from) one another. I know from contact with chaplains through the year that many of us are wrestling with very similar issues and it would be good to benefit from the experiences and wisdom of others.

Last October, we also agreed to work towards a new relationship between the different regional, national and denominational networks to which many (though not all) of us also belong. My hope is that each network will want to share with the conference something of the issues they have addressed during the past year, and also some of their good practice and achievements. We also now have two new co-ordinators for the Association, responsible for training and development and for collating liturgical/worship resources (including

IACAC opening and closing ceremonies, induction/licensing services, memorial and pastoral services) in many languages. We will hear more from Peter and Lewis in these roles soon. In the meantime, do please look out for training or worship resources that you would be willing to share with the rest of us. Finally, and most importantly, please continue to pray with me for the people of Brussels and especially for our chaplaincy colleagues in Brussels-Zaventem Airport, (Archbishop Athenagoras Peckstadt, Father Michel Gaillard, Rev Edwin Delen together with their Christian, Muslim and Jewish colleagues) as they minister to staff, colleagues and public following the targeted terrorist attacks last month. Such events reveal how closely linked we are – both because of the nature of aviation, but also because of the nature of our spiritual relationship (to quote Saint Paul) *\*\*\*\*If one member suffers, all suffer together with it.* \* 1 Corinthians 12:26 NRSVA\*

I will finish with important words quoted from our colleague and brother, Father Michel Gaillard of Brussel-Zaventem, quoted in the Catholic Herald: *\*\*\*\*The airport is a large community, all of which has been affected. Although people are still in shock, I'm moved by how many have placed themselves at the service of the injured and traumatised. In a world where finance is often considered the most important thing, this event has reminded us of our vulnerability - as well as of the bonds of profound humanity we reveal in showing care and compassion for each other. This is the great lesson I take from what's happened.* \*\* (full report at:

**\*[www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2016/03/24/airport-chaplain-struck-by-profound-humanity-after-brussels-blasts](http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2016/03/24/airport-chaplain-struck-by-profound-humanity-after-brussels-blasts)\***  
<<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2016/03/24/airport-chaplain-struck-by-profound-humanity-after-brussels-blasts>> )



The Revd George Lane  
Coordinating Chaplain The Chaplaincy,  
Manchester Airport Manchester M90 1QX  
President, International Association of Civil Aviation  
Chaplains  
[www.iacac.info](http://www.iacac.info)

### **IACAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE-PARIS**

Registrations have opened for the IACAC Annual Conference to be held in Paris from 23<sup>rd</sup> August – 28<sup>th</sup> August followed by the Post Conference Tour 28<sup>th</sup> August-1<sup>st</sup> September 2016. Information and links to the registration process are on the website [www.iacac.info](http://www.iacac.info)

Early bird registrations are available until 1<sup>st</sup> June for chaplains coming from countries outside Europe. The conference accommodation is in 2 of the airport hotels and they are accessible by shuttle bus from the airport terminals. The two hotels are quite close to each other. Breakfast each day will be at the hotels and other

meals will be at various venues according to the program. Nights included in the conference fee are- 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, & 27<sup>th</sup> August [5 nights]. All meals but dinner on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August are included in the registration. Dinner on the 25<sup>th</sup> August is at your own choice and expense either during an evening free in Paris or at the hotel. The conference ends on the evening of Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August with the Gala Dinner beginning at 7pm. The theme of this year's Gala Dinner will be "Rock N' Roll" so get out your dancing shoes and start practising.

We look forward to seeing you in Paris for what promises to be a very interesting program.

### **NEWS FROM OUR CHAPLAINCIES**

Messages of support have been sent to our colleagues in Brussels and they are very grateful for the many thoughts and prayers. The Protestant Chaplain, Rev Edwin Delen wrote on the day after the attack.

*"Thank you so much for your mail. I was able to comfort the passengers who couldn't leave the airport, yesterday at the airport. My colleague Michel Gaillard was able to be with the passengers just outside the airport. So many nationalities and religions packed together, even praying and waiting in solidarity. Greetings from Brussels."*

Fr Steve Teston from Manila sends his greetings. All her friends will be sad to know that Rebecca Dequina from the Manila Chaplaincy has been unwell again but is slowly improving. We wish Rebecca a full return to health as soon as possible.

Rev Michael and Linda Banfield, formerly at London Luton, are in Australia for a holiday and took time to visit Melbourne. Michael was very impressed by the new Terminal 4 building and they enjoyed their time with the Melbourne Chaplains.

Our good wishes are still with Mrs Bev McNeely from Indianapolis as she continues her recovery from the extensive back surgery she underwent in February.

The British Isles and Ireland Airport Chaplains' Network will meet in Belfast City Airport on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April. They are looking forward to an interesting and productive time together.

Sydney Airport is very pleased to welcome their new chaplain. Major Margaret O'Neill of the Salvation Army has recently taken up the position as coordinating chaplain. We congratulate her on the appointment.

### **THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH**

WE would accomplish many more things if we did not think of them as impossible.

C.Malesherbes