



Report for the International Presbytery March 2020



It will soon be 9 months since Colomba le Roc was blessed by our moderator and little by little we are finding our way as a retreat house. It is however only now that we are officially functioning that we realise there are many issues that need reflection.

Over the last months we have realised that probably the most important issue is that of making ourselves known to those who could be interested.

Of course in due course we hope this will be done through word of mouth, but you need to get the first guests in and the way people in the general "hospitality business" attract guests (through AirBnB, Tripadvisor and other holiday booking and tourist sites) would not, we believe, be suitable for a retreat house.

After much reflection and discussion with guests we have (on top of the website and my monthly blog) started a Facebook page entitled "Colomba le Roc Retreat house ". I am still learning how best to make use of this page and how to make sure it reaches as many people who might be interested in a retreat as possible, but hopefully we'll get there in the end.

We also decided to produce a flyer, which will be printed in English, French and Dutch and sent to churches and colleagues who have shown an interest in retreats and /or pilgrimage. The flyer should be ready for Easter and will be e-mailed to the members of Presbytery in due course. Hopefully each Presbyter can then forward it to his or her contacts.

Furthermore we are now mentioned in the publication "Retreats 2020" in which we have also put an advertisement. At the moment it is difficult to estimate how effective these forms of making ourselves known are and whether it is worth expanding considering the costs involved.



It would seem that as far as the locals are concerned special day events could be very helpful too. However as we are officially registered as a B&B we cannot receive more than 15 people max and theoretically they should be staying the night.



There is a way round this which is by creating an "association" like "friends of Colomba le Roc" and we have decided to go down this route. I would like this association to be Ecumenical and have therefore approached representatives of several branches of the Church asking them to become board members. Luckily people seem happy to be involved. So once the flyer is done I will focus on this next development.

For 2021 I would like to plan a few themed retreats which link biblical themes to this area of France (think “I am the vine” in autumn, or “I am the good shepherd” during the Transhumance week)



On the construction side of things, we will soon have finished our third guest bedroom and our outdoor kitchen has now been improved with a wood-burning pizza/bread oven (possible retreat theme: “I am the bread of life”?)

Work on meditation areas in the garden is also progressing but it is all very time consuming. Luckily during the winter not much happens so it is the ideal time for building and repair work. However as our first guest for 2020 is expected in two weeks time , all traces of building work will hopefully have disappeared by then 😊.



Let me just mention that, thanks to the quiet winter months at Colomba le Roc, I was able to spend 6 weeks on Malta in November/December as a locum. I enjoyed my time with the people of St Andrew’s very much and wish them God’s blessing and all the best with their new minister.

Driving on Malta takes some getting used to even in a Rev car!

My stay on Malta was, by the way, very helpful for the week of Prayer for Christian Unity as I was asked to lead the Ecumenical service in Cahors and some of the pictures I had taken during my stay were printed on the order of service.

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