Edinburgh 2017 General Meeting



Festal Evensong St Mary`s Cathedral

Friday September 29th 5.30 pm

St Mary`s Cathedral was packed for this special Scottish Episcopal service of Evensong which was introduced by the Bishop of Edinburgh, The Right Revd Dr John Armes, with singing lead by the Cathedral Choir.

I always find these special services that open our General Meetings, be they a Eucharist or, as in this case Evensong, to be uplifting and inspirational and this was no exception. Possibly a thousand voices joined the processional hymn, “Ye holy angels bright” and my spirit rejoiced! It was just so good to be there with so many M.U. members (amongst whom there were quite a few men too).

The two Bible readings were read by Lynne Tembey our Worldwide President and Jean McPherson-Richardson, Provincial President Scotland.

Prayers and responses were sung beautifully by the choir and the intercessions were shared by ladies from our host diocese and were preceded and ended by the singing of one of my favourite hymns “Spirit of God, unseen as the wind”, sung to the Skye Boat Song.

The Office hymn was not one I knew and there was an explanation on the service sheet. It had been written by Timothy Dudley-Smith in1998 at the request of the M.U. Winchester Diocese to mark the last truly World Wide Council and the words were lovely.

The sermon was given by the Most Revd Mark Strange, Bishop of Moray, Ross & Caithness, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Bishop Mark`s address was a balance of serious content interspersed with flashes of humour. He talked about angels, or more precisely angelic behaviour which, he said, was frequently appropriate when describing the work of Mothers Union. Sometimes angel messages are uncomfortable, for example when Gabriel told Mary that she was to be the mother of Jesus. This was hardly what she, a betrothed but as yet unmarried young women wanted to hear, she must have been terrified! He also talked about Parson Duncan McKenzie who travelled the Highlands preaching the Gospel but also providing simple medical and material support to anyone who needed it. People are therefore capable of angelic attitude and behaviour whiles most definitely not being angels and Bishop Mark believed that M.U. and its work comes under that heading.

The service ended with that traditional evening hymn “The day Thou gavest Lord is ended”. As always, our opening worship had set the bar high, a very fitting start to our General Meeting 2017.

**Sylvia Hickey**