



The Anglican Church of Uruguay

A Profile of the Diocese

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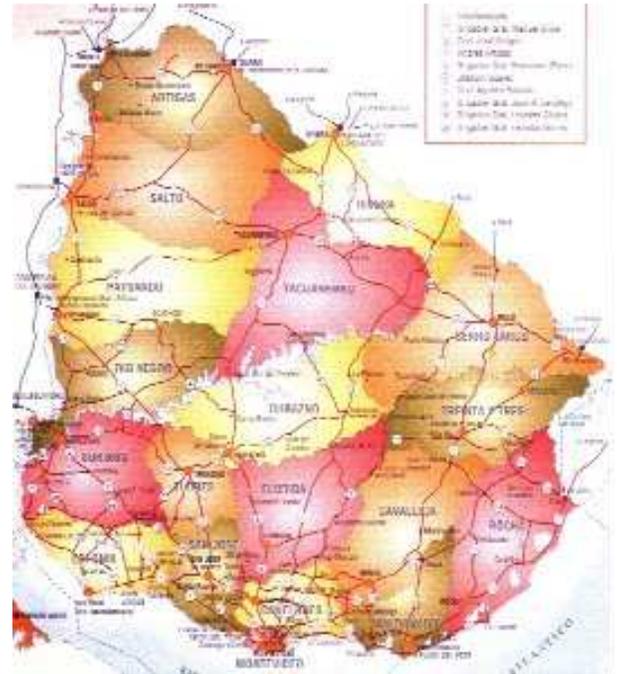
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The Diocesan Shield

The front cover shows the shield of the Diocese of Uruguay which tells the story of our origins and our identity. It says we are Uruguayan, Anglican and a Diocese. As in all Diocesan shields, the Bishop's mitre demonstrates that in this Episcopal Church the Bishop is the principal pastor of the Diocese, part of the succession of Bishops that trace their roots back to the historical apostles, the first leaders of the Church. In our case the Bishop's mitre has the sun of Uruguay, as seen in the national flag, rising behind it. The red St. George cross on a white background links us not only to the Church of England but also to the shield of Diocese of Argentina, our Diocese of origin. At the centre of this cross is a ring of Celtic knot work and the shell of St. Augustine of Canterbury. These symbols represent the two main roots of the Anglican tradition – Celtic Christianity with its missionary zeal and the Christianity of Augustine brought in his mission from Rome. The Celtic knot work design on the sides of the shield has no beginning and no end, representing the eternal nature of God and relates to the Holy Trinity, which is also the dedication of the first Anglican church in Uruguay.

In the top left hand corner of the shield is the hill of Montevideo with the waters of the bay in front. The blue and white lines of the bay also take the theme of the stripes in the national flag. The top right hand corner has three circles with blue and white bands representing the three main rivers of the republic – the Uruguay, the Negro and the Plate. The three original Anglican churches – St Luke's, Salto; the Trinity, Fray Bentos; and Holy Trinity, Montevideo were built close to these rivers. The three circles also represent the three wells of the shield of the Southwell Diocese, England, from which the first Bishop of Uruguay came.

1. Uruguay: the Country



Uruguay is one of the smaller countries of Latin America with a population of 3.4 million. The capital city Montevideo has a population of 1.3 million and is the social, political and cultural hub of the country. The next biggest city Salto in the north has a population of 104,000.

Uruguay became a republic in 1825, independent of both Argentina and Brazil who both had claims on the territory. It is mainly populated by European immigrants the biggest groupings of which are Spanish and Italian. There is also a minority population of those with Afro-Caribbean roots., mainly distant relatives of Brazilian slaves from the 19th Century. There is no indigenous population as such, although some 20% of the population claim descendancy from the 'Charruas'; the indigenous people who once inhabited this land.

Uruguay is a secular state, the church and state having been officially separated at the beginning of the 20th Century. The Roman Catholic Church is the largest denomination in Uruguay and all the main denominations are represented. The last decade or so has seen the growth of many charismatic Pentecostal churches. Jehovah's witnesses and Mormons are also present. The Moonies have made financial investments in the country but tend not to be active.

Uruguay enjoys a strong democratic system, although it was the scene of one of the more brutal Latin American dictatorships between 1973-1985. Until recently Uruguay politics have been dominated by two right of centre parties the Colorados and the Blancos. In November 2004 the Frente Amplio, a left wing coalition party won just over 50% of the popular vote and became Uruguay's first ever left-wing government.

The Uruguayan economy was traditionally based on agriculture especially the sale of leather, beef and wool. Nowadays banking and tourism – especially in relation to Argentinians visiting Uruguay's beaches – are also important factors in the economy.

At one time the Uruguay economy was one of the strongest in Latin America but by the latter half of the 20th Century the country had experienced economic downturn and recession. In line with other countries in the region the early years of the 21st Century were particularly difficult and Uruguay experienced something of a socio-economic crisis in 2002 when the banking system collapsed and unemployment and inflation rose sharply. Since that time a slow and painful recovery has continued.

2. History of the Anglican Church of Uruguay

At the end of the first half of the 19th Century English businessmen came to South America in order to invest in the railways that had recently opened, and other public services, as well as in industry, ranching and agriculture. With them they brought their faith and its traditions and consequently it was in 1843 that the Reverend William Birch was designated as the first Anglican chaplain of Montevideo. He celebrated the first religious offices on the 4th of June of that year, and weekly services continued from that time.



At the start of the following year work began on the first church in Montevideo which was located on an area of land next to the sea at the start of the street 'Treinta y Tres'. It remained here until 1934 when the local government ordered it to be relocated to the nearby position it now occupies a few hundred yards further inland; this

was to permit the building of the main coastal road.

When a Diocese of the Anglican Church was formed in Argentina in 1925 it included the three congregations originally established in Uruguay i.e. in Montevideo, Fray Bentos and Salto.

During the 1950's and 60's, and after many changes both nationally and internationally, church activity lessened. The faithful members declined in numbers as British business interests in Uruguay declined and the British community in Montevideo became less significant. With its focus remaining on the English speaking community the church was becoming less and less relevant. The communities in Salto and Fray Bentos practically disappeared.

The first services in Spanish took place in 1970 when a Brazilian Bishop asked the Bishop of Buenos Aires for permission to visit and take services in Spanish in Montevideo for a few families that had moved from the northern border with Brazil. In 1979 a Spanish speaking priest from England, Rev. Andy Couch arrived with the task of developing the Spanish speaking ministry. The Spanish ministry has continued and grown since that time and Spanish is now the main language used throughout the Diocese. There is still a small English Ministry which is based at the Cathedral.

In 1986, Archdeacon William Godfrey arrived and started to work towards forming a new Diocese in our country - the Anglican Church of Uruguay. This was achieved on 10th December 1989 when the Diocese of Uruguay became part of the Province of South America, with its Episcopal Seat in the old Holy Trinity Church, Montevideo, which therefore became the Cathedral.

The church has grown significantly since that time,

and now has 7 parishes and 5 missions. Rev. Miguel Tamayo was consecrated as the second Diocesan Bishop in May 1998. He and his wife Rev- Deacon Martha Lopez are Cuban and came to Uruguay in 1995 as mission partners sponsored by the Anglican Church of Canada.



3. The Anglican Church of Uruguay Today: Holistic Mission in practice

From its earliest days the diocese has been keen to develop the idea of holistic mission; preaching the Good News of the Gospel while putting this Good News into practice by seeking to address both the material and spiritual needs of the communities it work with. As a result the Diocese now undertakes a comprehensive social outreach programme that works with pre-school children and their families; adolescents in the areas of work experience and training; the homeless, including homeless young people; young people with special education needs; as well as those who are HIV+ and who are living in poverty. Its community support work also includes medical facilities in an impoverished area of Salto and an organic vegetable project in a poor part of Progreso, just outside Montevideo. The aim is to follow the example of Jesus to actively meet the needs of the communities that the church works with and to demonstrate the all encompassing and active nature of God's saving love for all his people.

The Anglican Diocese of Uruguay is made up of the following 7 parishes and 5 missions:

Parishes

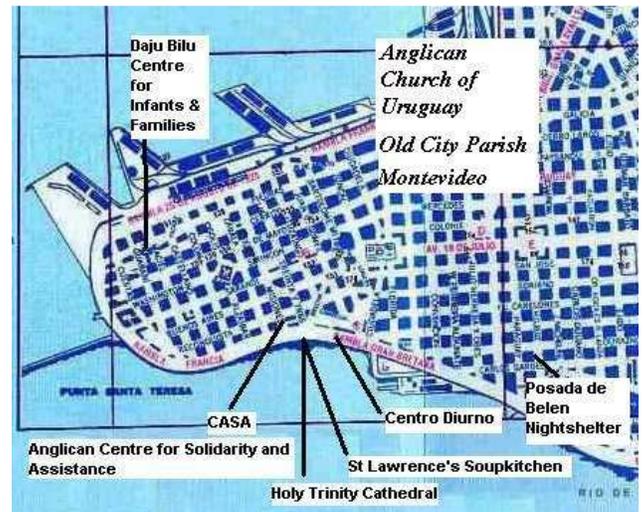
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A brief overview of each Parish and Mission is given below.

Old City Parish, Montevideo



The Old City is the historical centre of Montevideo and the remains of its once fortified walls are still visible. Nowadays it is a place of contrasts, housing as it does the important banks and other financial institutions which are a key part of Uruguay's modern economy alongside the crumbling architectural remains of Uruguay's colonial past. Many of these buildings are now over-crowded bedsits or 'pensions', home to some of Montevideo's poorest families. The area also has a large homeless population.

The Old City Parish

Congregation is based at Holy Trinity Cathedral and is currently presided over by the Rev. Paulo Duarte. Father Paulo comes from South Western



Brazil and is serving as a missionary in Uruguay through USPG's *Exchanging Places* missionary programme. Father Paulo is assisted by Seminarian Lilián Silveira, who has particular responsibility for overseeing the work of the San Lorenzo soup kitchen, part of the comprehensive social and pastoral outreach programme of the parish. In the Old City, holistic mission is delivered through a number of centres and projects to respond to the great needs of the local population, as outlined below.

Comedor San Lorenzo (St. Lawrence's Soup Kitchen) This was the first social work project that the church started as a response to the large number of people living on the streets in the Old City who came to the church asking for assistance. The project



provides hot meals for up to 70 adults several times a week. It is based in the crypt of the Cathedral. Those attending are directed to other support mechanisms such as Alcoholics

Anonymous. A number of people also attend a weekly Bible study that was developed out of a previous Alpha course.

Dajú Bilú - Centre for the Assistance of Infants and Families (CAIF) Dajú Bilú helps around 45 children each year. These children, aged between two and four, from poor families living in the Old City area, are assisted through education, provision of healthy meals, socialisation, and psychological assistance where appropriate. The programme has been developed in partnership with the National Institute for the Child. The aim is to provide pre-school support to the children of families who cannot afford private nursery care, and therefore overcome some of the education and socialisation disadvantages that these children would otherwise face when they start school. Many of the children and their families attend activities at the Cathedral.



Centro Anglicano de Solidaridad and Ayuda (CASA) (Anglican Centre for Solidarity and Assistance) Youth unemployment is very high throughout Uruguay. The Anglican Centre for Solidarity and Assistance, established in 1990, works with disadvantaged young adults in the area of vocational training and preparation for



work. Through partnership with the local government of Montevideo and various service contracts with public and private enterprises, a range of work schemes have been developed where young people gain the experience and work habits they need to enter permanent employment. The work has included beach cleaning, street sweeping and cleaning of municipal buildings, gardening and assistance at service stations.

Group sessions, personal development plans and computer training as well as job seeking help, also form part of the holistic approach to assisting young people and helping them into work. Daniel Crawford, a young missionary from Texas, provides pastoral support and a link to the churches youth work and other activities.

Centro Diurno PANAMBI (Day Centre) This day centre and workshop opened in 1996 as a partnership between the local government and the church. It works with adolescents and young adults with



learning disabilities. Around 25 young people each year share the experience of developing skills specifically in 3 workshops- ceramics, leather and basket weaving. This craftwork is sold through the centre and at local markets. In addition to craftwork skills, assistance is available

in literacy and there are group sessions with discussion, games and music. Many of the young people attend an optional weekly Bible study and also participate in youth activities alongside other young people from the different parishes of the church.

Posada de Belen (Bethlehem Inn) The Posada de Belen started work in 1999 in partnership with the



National Institute of Minors. The project is aimed at children, adolescents and also young mothers with children living on the streets. It offers services that will help to satisfy their basic needs and a

space that guarantees protection. Visitors from the church come regularly in a befriending role and to undertake Biblically based craft activities.

English speaking ministry, based at Holy Trinity Cathedral

The UK played a significant part in Uruguay's history when the country established its independence from both Brazil and Argentina in the early 19th Century. For some time after, the UK continued to be one of Uruguay's main commercial partners, involved in the railways, public utilities, and agriculture. As a consequence there was a significant British community in Uruguay. This led to the establishment of an English-speaking Anglican church in the 1840's.

Nowadays the Diocese of Uruguay is predominantly Spanish-speaking, but there is still a small English-speaking ministry. Many members of this community are the descendents of those who settled in Uruguay during the 19th century, who have endeavoured to preserve some of their English-speaking roots. There are also those who have settled here more recently and often have connections with foreign businesses here. There is a weekly service in English at the cathedral. In addition, the church has close contacts with the Winston Churchill Home for the Elderly, mainly serving those with British roots. This is located within the British Hospital, one of several private hospitals in the city, which also dates from the mid 19th century. A weekly service is also held here, and there are regular visits to patients.

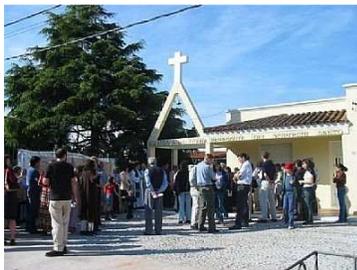


For several years the English-speaking ministry has been without a dedicated priest. This is about to

change with an appointment due to take place soon. In the meantime, this work is shared between Bishop Miguel and others.

Holy Spirit Parish, Malvin, Montevideo

The Mission in the Malvin neighbourhood of Montevideo started with a group of people sent from the English Parish of the Cathedral by Bishop Bill Godfrey. Its objective was to reach out to people with family roots in the Anglican



church. The ministry was conducted in Spanish. Although there was a good response at times, there was no strong ongoing support from the original target group and consequently the mission of this

congregation has been through a period of transition. It has emerged as a community of the faithful, small in numbers but stable. Since May 2004 Father Gonzalo Soria has led the parish.

With the renovation of the chapel in Malvin a new stage of mission in the area has begun. The building is of use to the Diocese for meetings, retreats and to look after guests.

Saint Stephen's Parish, Montevideo

Saint Stephen's Parish, Montevideo, began with many years of missionary work. Meetings initially took place in a local family home as the community developed a vision for the parish.

In September 2002, a new chapel was opened. In the same building, the parish opened a hostel to assist people living with HIV/AIDS who were in poverty and had nowhere to live. The church felt called to reach out to and work with this population, having encountered the problems of those who were HIV+ who came from the rural areas to Montevideo for treatment but had nowhere to stay and no family to support them and who ended up on the streets. The Parish Priest is Father Leonardo Goyret who is assisted by the Rev-Deacon Martha López.

The work of San Esteban Hostel



The hostel functions in co-ordination with the public health service and offers a range of support services for those in poverty who are HIV+. The project is co-

coordinated by a doctor with the support of two nurses (supported by USPG), and is able to provide a full range of medical support and advice. The hostel provides residential accommodation for those who are HIV+ who would otherwise be living on the streets or in other inadequate situations. Residents live in community and share household tasks. The circumstances of those helped by the project change over time and many former residents also use the services of the hostel. They come for meals, to use the facilities and for support and advice. Some return as volunteers to assist in the running of the project. Pastoral support is always available and there are regular prayer times at the hostel. Many residents choose to participate in the life of the parish.

St. Augustine's Parish, Jardines del Hipódromo, Montevideo

On 26th May 1990, the foundation stone of the church St. Augustine's, in Jardines de Hippodromo, a working class area on the outskirts of Montevideo was laid. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who was visiting at the time, presided over the ceremony. Rev. Never Araujo leads this community, with the assistance of his wife Rev-Deacon Lucilda Texeira.



Through its Centre for the Assistance of Infants and Families (CAIF) the Church provides pre-school support to the children of local families who cannot afford private nursery care, and therefore overcomes some of the education and socialisation disadvantages that these children would otherwise face when they start school.

The Trinity Parish, Fray Bentos

The oldest records of the work of the Anglican Church in Fray Bentos go back to November 1875 when a Revd. Richard Croker was designated as a chaplain in Fray Bentos by the South American Mission Society (SAMS). The congregation principally consisted of the businessmen and workers connected to the large local meat-factory 'Liebeg'. It was they



who constructed the chapel which survives to this day. In 1971 with the sale of the factory and the return of the majority of the English to England,

the chapel became increasingly decrepit until it was practically abandoned. In 2001 work began to restore the chapel. When the work was finished Bishop Miguel Tamayo rededicated the church and parish hall in December 2002. At the same time Rev. Gonzalo Soria was installed as the Parish Priest here. In a short space of time the missionary work within the area has borne fruit and there is now a faithful



community who regularly worship there.

The photos show the Chapel before and after the

restoration work. Although the chapel is now functional there is some outstanding work to complete the restoration of the chapel and of the adjacent church hall.

St. Luke's Parish, Salto

The present location of Saint Luke's Parish Church, Salto was donated by Mr. Richard A. Williams, whose desire to establish an Anglican church and an English speaking school coincided with discussions in Montevideo about placing a resident Anglican priest in Salto. The process began in 1866 and the gothic style church was completed in 1872. The Parish is now under the responsibility of Rev. Gilberto Porcal.

St James's Mission, Colon

The Anglican Church started its activities in the area of Colon in January 1994. Two months before a group of 140 families that had previously lived in the centre and Old City of Montevideo were relocated through a programme of the Ministry of Housing. A number of these families had links with the church and, as a result of this, the government allowed the church to help the families in their resettlement in the new neighbourhood.



The activities of the parish have continue to develop and grow in the impoverished community and the church undertakes a number of

important social outreach projects working with children, adolescents and with young mothers. These projects provide an important contribution to the life of this community as well as demonstrating the Gospel in action and God's love for all his people. In April 2004 Rev. Heber Castaño assumed responsibility for the parish.

Holy Spirit Mission, Salto

This mission is located in a poor neighbourhood of Salto. The mission undertakes activities with children through a Centre for Infants and their Families. The church also runs a medical centre from its premises



giving access to a Dr., nurse and midwife, and therefore allowing far easier access to these services than would otherwise be available to

members of the local community. The Mission is under the responsibility of Rev. Gilberto Porcal.

St Paul's Mission, Progreso

Progreso is a town (pop. 17000) situated some 32 km outside the city of Montevideo, Uruguay. St Paul's Mission is located in La Villa Felicidad, a suburb of Progreso. La Villa Felicidad is a recent development dating back only 15 years or so. This is an impoverished community. Basic infrastructure is in place—unsealed roads; street lighting on main routes; water and electricity—but there is a lack of adequate social, health and community facilities. Housing is largely self-built and is generally of poor quality with evidence of overcrowding.



The mission in this area began when a seminary student began to undertake Bible studies and ministry in a family home. Gradually this

small group began to grow in numbers and it became increasingly impractical to meet in local homes. This led to the initial discussions about establishing a permanent presence in the area which would provide not only space for gathering for prayer and worship, but also for the implementation of the social and practical activities that the Mission was increasingly involved in, in an effort to meet some of the needs of this impoverished community.

In 2002 funding was given towards the purchase of a plot of land, and a plan to develop this in phases, as resources allowed, was formulated. The new Chapel was consecrated in November 2004.

The Mission now involves up to 25–30 people in attendance at worship events while social activities involve contact with many more—the number of children attending the afternoon snack has, at times, reached 70, while many local families are involved in an innovative organic vegetable growing project and several people regularly attend a ceramic workshop.

The Mission Team consists of Rev Paulo Duarte and Alejandro Manzoni a Seminary Student.

St. Andrew's Mission, Tacuarembó

This small mission currently meets in a family home. The Mission is under the responsibility of Rev. Heber Castaño.

St. Mary's Mission, Rivera

This mission is located on the northern Uruguayan border with Brazil. The Mission is under the



responsibility of Rev. Gilberto Porcal who visits once a month to undertake services.