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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

COMMITTEE OF SWISS CATHOLICS IN LONDON: CHAPLAIN'S REPORT FOR 1973

After the worries of the year 1972 in finding and building up a new pastoral centre for the Swiss in London were over, the chaplain began to explore the best way to make it available. Right from the start it was understood that the building known as John Southworth Centre was intended to serve different groups in the neighbourhood and that the Swiss should be an integral part. Therefore he has readily accepted the task to act as chaplain of this Youth and Community Centre. Much time and devotion had to be invested in its success since the Swiss Catholic Mission has gladly accepted the hospitality and with it also a responsibility. In this way contact and mutual understanding with the local community will be established, and the Church acts as servant.

The Chaplancy for the Swiss on the second floor remained open throughout the week and welcomed the many young people who came for advice and help in various problems and sometimes just to come and say "thank you" for everything they had received during their stay in London.

Divine Services were held on weekdays for the local neighbourhood and office workers at noon and on Sundays especially for the young Swiss. The Mass at noon (11.30 a.m.) has not yet been discovered as an excellent means to find contact with the local people but it is hoped that time will help to make it more known. The evenings where the service is followed by much social activity and is held in German is still known as the main Sunday-Mass for the Swiss. Much time and preparation is involved to make the divine service meaningful and the foundation of community life. There are always signs among the young people that this is appreciated especially for the ecumenical spirit which is evident in all the Swiss Churches in London.

Though the administration of the Sacraments has always been scarce, preparation for marriage and advice has often been sought. The difficulties of the Church in finding new ways for the use of the sacrament of penitence is also felt, but there are always young people who

appreciate the time given to them for a serious revision of their lives and principles.

Home-visits were few, perhaps too many other things have burdened the mind of the chaplain so that he was not always able to sense the hidden wishes. The parish magazine *Die Stimme* has offered the service and once people begin to make use of it, one priest alone will not be able to cope with the demands, he will depend on the co-operation of residents who live in the neighbourhood. He is confident that this will be readily given.

The most rewarding aspect of all the activities of the chaplain is undoubtedly the ecumenical co-operation with the ministers and members of the other Swiss churches. This co-operation has grown to a real sense of togetherness, so that everything which is done and planned is supported by the others. Regular pastoral meetings ensure the common planning and an exchange of ideas and new aspects. The ministers help one another also in the conducting of services and the chaplain serves twice a month on Sunday mornings at the Eglise Suisse. This is an aspect that makes the work for the church in London really satisfying which is to unite people and to serve them.

For the mothers and the little children there is the third Wednesday of the month at the Eglise Suisse which is more and more visited by catholic mothers too, and provides an excellent means of contact and mutual help. For the old people of the neighbourhood in SW1 the John Southworth Centre has started a club on Thursday mornings, 10.30, and the Swiss will be most welcome. They run the club themselves and publish their own newsletter which is printed by the chaplain, the *Link Up*.

Youth club activities are, as always, the most successful and occupy most of the efforts and the time of the chaplain. The excursions in late spring, summer and early autumn and especially the camp in Ireland (two weeks in horse-drawn caravans) have shown a great response and have helped to create community, mutual help and deeper understanding of life and responsibility.

Bible and discussions groups met regularly on Sundays between 4 and 6 p.m., information about life in England, about schools and au-pair problems, etc., have regularly been attended on Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. The most popular activity, of course, has been the dancing after the Mass on Sundays. To make it more enjoyable courses for ballroom and modern dancing have been organised on Thursdays and were well attended.

In order to guide groupwork and study the dynamics and reaction of people in groups the ministers attended regular lessons in sensitivity training and encounter groups which led to a deeper understanding of themselves and their work.

The chaplain is very grateful to the

Committee of Swiss Catholics in London, especially to its Chairman, Oscar Grob K.S.G., and the different members who assist him with their support in spiritual and financial matters. It is, however, obvious to everybody that it could never meet all the expenses involved. The youth club, especially the social evenings and the membership contributions are an essential contribution towards the running costs, rates and rents and the treasurer, Mr. B. Frei, does a tremendous job in collecting and registering the weekly contributions. The Bishops' Conference in Switzerland and through them the "Schweizerische Fastenopfer" are the other great benefactors who help to keep the work going. To them and to all the silent helpers and benefactors we owe our thanks.

We also mention gratefully His Eminence, Cardinal Heenan, the Swiss Ambassador, Mr. A. Weitnauer and the staff of the Swiss Embassy for the interest, help and co-operation and we trust that in the times to come, when extensive renovations have to be undertaken on the building, we shall not be left alone to carry the burden of our share in putting the work for our youth on a safe footing.

Paul Bossard

A NEW SWISS RESTAURANT IN SOHO

For hundreds of young people the St. Moritz Club in Wardour Street is probably the best known Swiss "institution" in London. Indeed, it is quite likely that many au pair girls and trainees who come to do their stint in London never see St. Paul's Cathedral, or the British Museum, but soon find out about the St. Moritz and make it one of their regular haunts. Lorry drivers commuting from Britain to Switzerland have made it their obligatory port of call. The people one always sees crowded round the Stammtisch, drinking Warsteiner beer, speaking noisily with the heavy accent which is part of our legacy, are often veteran drivers who, having covered several hundred miles, find congenial companionship at the St. Moritz.

The owner of the club, Mr. Armin Loetscher, known to his young customers as *Sweetie*, has now added another string to his bow in opening a superbly decorated restaurant at No. 161 Wardour Street, next door to his club, whose inaugural evening followed the 1st August celebration at Wimbledon.

The St. Moritz Club Restaurant, as it is called, is purposefully small (24 seats in all) and thus offers an intimate atmosphere. What is more, this atmosphere is authentically from back home. Armin's decorators have revived a mountain chalet, or Carnotzet environment with pinewood on the walls and many decorative items from rural and traditional Switzerland.

There is a beautiful ancient buffet from central Switzerland with earthenware bowls arrayed on its shelves;