

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

The Bishop in Europe:
The Right Reverend Dr. Robert Innes



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

BISHOP'S LENT APPEAL 2017

The Menedékház Foundation, Budapest, Hungary

The Menedékház, founded in 2005 on the outskirts of Budapest, helps homeless families with children reintegrate into the workplace and society at large. The name says it all: Menedékház, or shelter, originally referred to a temporary refuge in a forest or on a mountaintop placed there for those in need of cover during storms and at nightfall.

Last year my wife, Helen, was privileged to visit the Foundation. As she stood at the front door a family of six arrived who owned no more than a little cardboard suitcase. "Is this a prison?", asked the 4-year old. Later in the day Helen came across the same family who had been admitted and were now crowded into a single bedroom, enjoying some hot soup provided by the project.



At the Menedékház a professional staff of social workers serves some 160 people, many of whom do not meet the criteria of other established social assistance programmes. Some clients find their way to the shelter from impoverished villages in the countryside. Other clients are residents of Budapest who may have suddenly lost a job or been evicted from housing. Still others make their way to the Menedékház from alternative shelters now abruptly unavailable to them for bureaucratic reasons.

The Menedékház is housed in aging Soviet-era military barracks. They provide minimal amenities and little privacy for the families served. It is a roof over the head – sometimes not

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much more -- a place for families to catch their breath while parents seek employment and children try to continue their schooling during the crisis the family is facing. A significant proportion of clients are of Roma family background. The Menedékház has also from time to time provided shelter to refugees and migrants.

The 2017 Lent Appeal Project

Whilst the Menedékház has washrooms and toilets, they are in poor repair and highly communal, offering little privacy or sense of security to families already traumatised. Built decades ago for military recruits, the facilities are today wholly inadequate and run-down, with peeling paint, cracked flooring and tiles, and little ventilation.



Accordingly, this year's Lent Appeal Project at the Menedékház in Hungary aims to fund the comprehensive renovation of the family washrooms, providing individual cabins or cubicles for family groups to change, wash, and shower.

We estimate the cost of renovation to be in the range of ten to fifteen thousand pounds sterling. The proposed renovation will include....

- Three large bathroom areas, one on each floor of the building
- Ten to twelve cabins or cubicles in each washroom with doors and locks for individual and family use
- One or more baby-changing and washing stations
- Sinks
- Toilets
- Tile flooring
- New walls
- Ventilation
- Showers
- Upgraded electricity
- Upgraded plumbing
- Windows

Sometimes it is the smallest things in life that count the most. With this project, we hope to improve the lives of those served by the Menedékház. Washing-up and toileting facilities may not seem exciting in the grand scheme of things but they are essential and much appreciated among those who are vulnerable or otherwise just getting by.

Learn more about the Menedékház and their services to the homeless online at www.menedekhaz.hu

Please do consider how you can support my appeal. I wish you a holy and spiritually fulfilling Lent. As usual, you can give money to this appeal through your church treasurer, who will forward money to the diocesan office.

With every blessing,

+ Robert Gibraltar in Europe

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