



Ecumenism in Switzerland: Sharing our journeys of faith at the 'Forum Chrétien Romand'



© Matthieu Pochon

Some hundred members of the many Christian denominations in French-speaking Switzerland (the area known as Romandie) met in Leysin from 10th to 13th October for the first ever 'Romand Christian Forum'. The Swiss Archdeaconry was represented by the archdeacon and members from Vevey and Geneva chaplaincies.

The Forum was inspired by the World Christian Forum and the Francophone Christian Forum (Lyon 2018) and followed the same pattern. The participants - Catholics, Reformed, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Orthodox, Old Catholics, Anglicans, Adventists, Salvationists, Baptists, and members of other communities and movements - came together to share their personal experiences of faith, while focussing on what brings them together. They shared their traditions and cultures, personal histories, and what it meant for them to live a life of faith.

"This Forum reminded us that what unites us is much stronger than what separates us: we are one in Christ." Together the participants agreed that "Christ is the pearl of great price. He teaches us to put God first, to love him above all else, and to live his new commandment of mutual love."

Based on the experience gained at this Forum, they call on the churches, communities, and Christian movements of French-speaking Switzerland to 'step over the barriers that separate. "We went up the mountain, not to settle our theological differences, but to get to know each other better and be touched by the Holy Spirit. So many things seem to separate us, and our images of others are often mistaken. We forget our common roots and that we are part of the same household of faith; part of the family of God' (1 Peter 2:5-10)."

The members of the Forum met in small groups to hear about each other's faith journey. "Having the courage to share one's personal experiences creates a unique bond". This groupwork, together with workshops, worship, a public celebration in Aigle, and visits to nearby church locations in the Chablais and on the Vaud Riviera, provided ample opportunity to learn more about the many and diverse ways of theological understanding and expressions of being Church – and to begin to build new bridges.