



**Evangelisering**

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## MobileChurch Project

*A mobile Church for mobile people*

### Project

The MobileChurch is an evangelization project in the Diocese of Copenhagen.

My name is Kaare H. Nielsen and I am a permanent deacon in the Diocese of Copenhagen. My tasks include the new evangelization, an area of which I am in charge.

The MobileChurch is one of the initiatives having to do with evangelization in the Diocese of Copenhagen. This service has arisen from the fact that I felt a personal vocation to meet people without any preconceptions and in this way, let them experience God's love and closeness. I consider myself fortunate that my bishop Czesław Kozon went along with the idea of transforming a site trailer into a portable chapel.

With this mobile church, my two volunteer collaborators and I have the possibility to meet people in the pedestrian zone in Copenhagen (and elsewhere). The people thus have the opportunity to experience the Church first-hand – but in their own rhythm and in the way that they wish.

Those who work for the mobile church see lending an ear to people as their primary task. We listen to what motivates and moves our visitors, to what they want to share and to what they need and we don't speak too much ourselves. This is only natural since we were created with two ears and two eyes but only one mouth.

*Those who come across the mobile church can*

- pray
- sit in silence
- read
- just be there
- get lost in their thoughts
- talk to someone
- ask for prayers for themselves or their intentions

*Those who work for the mobile church would like, by means of this initiative*

- to meet people in their everyday lives and where they feel at home
- to offer visitors as space of silence in the middle of the hectic big city
- to be always ready for a dialogue
- to give, to listen, to laugh and cry together with people
- to come into contact with people

- to share God's Good News which is fostering life
- to offer a time out - both spiritually and psychologically
- to strengthen the visitors in their body and soul
- to simply be there for the "road companions"
- to pray for and with each other
- to give witness to the closeness of God in our lives

### **How and what is the MobileChurch?**

The MobileChurch is a transformed site trailer made into a chapel. Inside there is an icon, some candles and a pew. On the outside, it is decorated with the image of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

The roof of the mobile church can be opened. Underneath the volunteers are ready and offer the passers-by coffee, tea and cakes and also a chat to go with the cakes. The detachable roof is good because you can be sheltered from the rain in bad weather and from the sun in summer. But most especially, we offer our time, our ears and our hearts. First of all, it is about the human encounter, then if the visitor - who is always the one setting the rhythm - so wishes, we share with him/her our faith in a God who is close to us and we pray for or with each other.

The MobileChurch is located on Thursday evenings in Copenhagen's pedestrian zone called the Strøget. We chose the day of the week on purpose. It is the "small Friday", in which people are already thinking about the weekend, and often strolling aimlessly through the city. They have time and no commitments to attend to. And so they also have time for the mobile church. It is only when people have time that they will stop; if they are busy, if they want to go for a meal or to the movies or to buy Christmas presents they won't stop.

The visitors always determine the rhythm and the direction of the meeting. We wish to be there for the people who come across the MobilChurch. We try to give them whatever they need or ask for. We want to be companions.

Most visitors are eager to talk, share very personal things with us, difficult things, sad things but also their joys. After talking to us some ask for prayers and for a blessing.

The conversation starts very easily: We have coffee and cakes and are often asked: "What are you doing here? Why are you standing here?"

Homeless people also pass by and receive clothes and warm coffee.

I have been driving the MobileChurch for five years now. Each time I go home feeling richly blessed. We never know what the evening will bring. Very often, especially in the long, dark and cold autumn/winter nights, I must find some extra motivation within myself in order to bring the chapel among the people. It is very cold and we must stay outside for 3-4 hours. And, before that, one has to clean the trailer, bake the cakes, make the coffee... Not always do we feel a high motivation as we start the evening. But after that we are always as new. After I hear people's stories and after we pray together, I am certain again: "Yes, now I remember why we are standing here. Why this kind of service is so important."

*The mobile church not only makes us mobile; it also IS the church for mobile people.*

## **Evaluation**

At the beginning, I may have thought that, albeit with respect, but I should talk more directly about faith. Time, however, has taught me that God goes his own way with people in their own rhythm. The important thing, the most important, is listening. My experience is that many people lack a partner that listens to them and with whom they can lay it all out and share everything.

Maybe it doesn't sound like much, but it can change a whole lot for the visitors. Some of them come again, while others are only passing through our city.

The reactions of people in the pedestrian zone are also very encouraging. We receive almost exclusively positive feedback – from people with various backgrounds: Christians of all denominations, followers of the Old Norse religion, atheists, Jews and Muslims. All of them are very positive to enthusiastic after they have talked to us. "This here", they say, "is a good thing."

And this gives us at the MobileChurch a lot of strength.

**Kaare H. Nielsen**

Deacon Kaare H. Nielsen