



Editorial



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That Was the Year that Was!

The calendar year just gone has been an eventful one for Catena. A glance at just some of what was recorded in the Association's journal over the last year makes interesting reading.

Among the people featured are, on the religious front, the Holy Father, the Papal Nuncio to Zimbabwe, Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops (including the Anglican Bishop of London), and a host (if that's the right word) of other clergy, some of whom are Catenians!

The Prince of Wales heads a more secular list, together with the Finnish Ambassador, the Lieutenant Governor of Guernsey, a Constable of Jersey, the Australian Federal Minister of Health, (a Catenian), and many others including the Editor of the Tablet and our own Brother Bart Smith, captain of the winning British Library team in University Challenge! There is also the usual and very heartening clutch of papal and civic awards to brothers of the Association.

It has been a good year for Catenian development with the inauguration of Wharfedale Circle, the setting up of the new Malta and Gozo Area, the establishment of Groups in Western Australia and Victoria with one of them, Bouvard, in Western Australia, to be inaugurated as a circle in its own right in a few weeks time. Much work is going on in Ampleforth and there are many other initiatives including exciting prospects for South Africa. Membership continues to play an increasingly important part in the Association's life with many circles recruiting outstandingly well; Shrewsbury with 21 in two years, Newbury and Ormskirk with nine each this year, Swansea with seven and Portsmouth with 12 in two years. And there are many more such encouraging stories.

Congratulations and good luck to all concerned.

There have been a goodly number of interesting features this year, by and about, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico; the Association's Webmaster, Warren Edwardes; Catenians in Hong Kong; Helping the Church in Hong Kong; Plater College; St Paul in Malta; the Catenian Vocations Group; the National Director of Vocations; and of course those from the Public Affairs Committee on Popetown, Education Transport Policy in Essex, the Mental Capacity Bill, Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill, the Civil Partnership Bill etc. Events recorded include the All Africa Golf Championships; the National Golf and several Provincial Championships, including Eastern Australia; Canberra Circle's official representation on the Archdiocesan Synod; Inter-Faith gatherings; the Grand Vice President's tour to Southern Africa; the Liverpool Conference, which was a magnificent success, and the reporting of splendid speeches: by Grand President John Clarke, Lord Brennan's Keynote Speech, and Archbishop Kelly's sermon on the Sunday.

The preparation of a memorial scroll to St John Fisher, and its placement in the Chapel Royal of the Tower of London, (where before there was no memorial at all), during the week for Christian Unity, was a private Catenian initiative.

The Letters Pages of Catena have covered a wide range of subjects: Popetown, Catholics in Hospital, Benevolence, the Bursary Fund, the Jumbulance, Project 2008, the Directory, Vocations, Capitation Fees, Abortion, Euthanasia, School Governors, the PAC, the Civil Partnership Bill, Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill, the Catenian Rosary Group and many other topics.

The recording of the ordinary and extraordinary examples of helping other people has surely been a source of great pleasure. While it is not of course the main thrust of Catenianism, the raising of money for good causes is a splendid by-product of much other activity. It has been estimated that the Association raises as much as £750,000 annually if Benevolence, the Bursary Fund and other such contributions are put alongside the usual Presidents' charities, local initiatives, sponsorships, etc.

Catena has featured stories of other help, eg, the visit to Serbia by CAFOD's Education Officer, a Catenian; the ongoing assistance by Australian circles to the East Timor Education Trust; the support by many circles for priests and nuns throughout the world, including Siberia, and so on. A particularly pleasant story was Knutsford Circle building the Christmas crib for the whole town. And of course there has been the ongoing success of the Bursary Fund in helping large numbers of young Catholics to help others.

Lastly, there is the current move of Head Office from Belgravia to Coventry. There will be a feature on the new staff in their new premise to look forward to.

All in all a remarkable year!

The front cover and the article on page highlight this year's Annual Conference to be held in Torquay. After an apparent spell in the doldrums the Conference over the last few years has been revived and revitalised with numbers attending at record levels.

This edition of Catena includes the excellent Conference literature again produced by Peter Rand of Kenilworth Circle. Brothers and their families are encouraged to get their bookings in for what is very likely to be another outstanding occasion.

