

Catenian London Weekend



A Busy Catenian Weekend in London

Over the weekend of November 20th and 21st 2004, the London area Catenian Circles and Provinces were very busy with two major events.

On the Saturday, the fourth **Towards Advent Catholic Festival of Culture** was held in Westminster Cathedral Hall in Ambrosden Avenue, adjoining the Cathedral.



(Left to right) Bishop Allan Hopes, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, Peter Bevan, Kingston Upon Thames Circle and HE Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor

As Bishop Allan Hopes said when he formally opened the Festival this year, the original idea was formulated for this event, when he was a parish priest in Chelsea some years ago. It had been suggested that a gathering should be arranged to display the many Catholic organisations and their varied involvement in Catholic life.

The concept was developed and in 2000 the first Festival was organised at Westminster, the cradle of Catholicism in England, and it has now grown each year since. The initial organisation was started by a number of Catholics, including Adrian Thacker, the Marketing Manager of The Catholic Truth Society (now of Ealing Circle) and Joanna Bogle, an independent Catholic journalist.

After the 2003 event, Adrian said that the time involved was starting to take over too

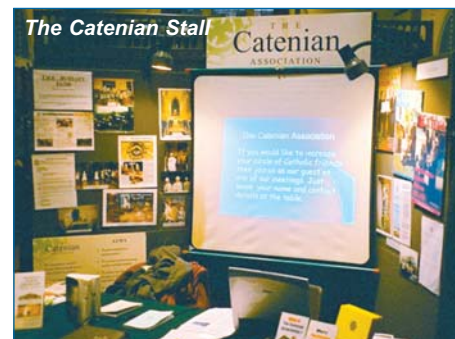
much of his working life and the committee looked for other help. An appeal was made to the Catenian Association and Fred Harkin, currently Provincial President of Province 14, kindly agreed to help the committee with the involvement of Hilary Sutton of Kingston Circle.

This year, whilst there is only space for 30 stalls and displays, over 40 Catholic organisations applied, regrettably some too late after the cut off date for applications and a waiting list soon formed. For the first time, Across Scotland agreed to bring a Jumbulance down from Glasgow for the event, to be parked outside and also had a stall in the Hall. Soon after 8 am on the Saturday, stall holders arrived to "set up shop", including the Catenian Association, and a fairly hectic time passed by until Bishop Allan, an Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster Diocese, formally opened the Festival at 10.30am. He was supported by the Children's Choir of Laleham Lea School, Purley with group and individual musical presentations, ending with everybody joining in the carol "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel".

Until 5pm, when the Festival closed, some 2,500 people passed through the Hall. The gangways seemed thronged most of the day, all stallholders reported excellent levels of business and enquiries; the Catenian stall received 7 specific enquiries regarding membership and some 1,500 leaflets and brochures were handed out. (We are very grateful to those 14 Brothers who helped man the stall during the day, even though we did not know that they were all coming!)

A number of workshops were held during the day and some were well oversubscribed. These included "Elizabeth 1st and her Catholics", "The Marian Shrines of England", "A Gregorian Chant Masterclass", and Vespers in Latin.

The Jumbulance staff reported a great



deal of interest in its work and a steady stream of visitors kept the on board personnel busy. Their stall, next to the Catenian stall, was equally busy. Bookings to Lourdes are now pretty full for 2005, and 2006 is starting to get fairly full.

Whilst the next day, the 6 Province Mass for Deceased Brothers was being held in the Cathedral, as the Jumbulance was committed to returning to Scotland on that day, Across were so delighted with the reception given at Westminster, they have already booked to return in 2005 and will stay for the Sunday, so that Brothers and families can visit the Jumbulance after the Mass.



The Jumbulance, pictured outside Westminster Hall, proved a great draw

There is now no doubt that this Festival is becoming a major event in the English Catholic Calendar and Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor said during his regular informal visit, "What a wonderful and expressive day for English Catholics".



Grand President gives the first reading

Sunday 21st November

For a number of years the local Provinces in the London area have held a **Memorial Mass in Westminster Cathedral** for Brothers of their Provinces, especially those who have died in the past year. Originally there were 5 Provinces but now 6 Provinces are involved.

With the Cathedral full of many Brothers and their families, our Grand President, John Clarke, local Directors and Provincial Presidents processed down the main aisle to take their places at the front, followed by the Cathedral Choir, the many altar servers and the three celebrants, headed by Monsignor Mark Langham, the Cathedral Administrator. He welcomed the Association to this special Mass and gave a very thought provoking sermon on a Mexican priest, martyred for his faith and allied this with the recent sad death of Margaret Hassan in Iraq.

The first reading was given by Grand President, John Clarke; the second reading by Pat Gallagher, Director of Province 7 and Richard Cheffins of South London Circle read the bidding prayers, which included the names of all Brothers in Provinces 2, 7, 8, 14, 18 and 19 who had died in the last year.

After the Mass many of the congregation met for coffee in the Cathedral Hall before adjourning to a number of local lunches. Sadly, due to a breakdown in communication, whilst the Catenian Vestments were present in the Cathedral, they were not used for the Mass. Hopefully next year they will be used, together with the Lectern Cover and other items.