



Letters

Bursary Fund Concern

Sir - From time to time I receive an urgent request for a donation from a charity such as CAFOD and I know that the need is immediate and that the bulk of my small donation will be used almost immediately in helping to relieve a serious overseas situation, with only a small portion of it being used in administration.

So may I express my amazement at the report of the Bursary Fund. From donations of over £54 thousand only £17 thousand was given out and Catenians are regularly asked to donate to the Fund so as to build up a sizeable bank balance, presumably with the intention of giving out the interest and, perhaps, the stock market gain. Indeed, the accounts look even more mercenary when it is seen that a balance of £180 thousand has been carried forward. At this rate the Fund has over ten years of reserves. Will it ever manage to serve its original purpose by operating a policy which gives out less than ten per cent of its banked holding? I may also ask if the Charity Commission will view such a mode of operation as justified.

As the treasurer, for some years, of an inner city boys club I tried to build up a reserve of three years operating costs to enable us to survive the time when donations did not match revenue expenditure or to cover unforeseen repairs to the building. I deemed it sufficient. But when I think that less than ten per cent of any annual donation that I make to the Bursary Fund is going to be given out then I feel the money would be much better used by a needy charity.

Eddie Hignett
North Lancashire Circle

Improved Clarity

Sir - In the interests of improved clarity for applicants and to more properly reflect the precise aims of the Catenian Bursary Fund, the Trustees have revised the funding application form.

Applications for a grant from Roman Catholics aged between 16 and 25 involving themselves in projects, at home or abroad, conjointly for their own and the community's benefit which implement Christian principles, are available from the Catenian Bursary Fund and are welcomed by the Trustees. So that applications can be fully assessed, the Trustees require applicants to apply at least three months before the start of their project and ensure that their applications are received by the Trustees at least three weeks prior to a Trustee meeting.

The Trustees are scheduled to meet in 2005 on January 18, March 22, June 28, September 13, November 22 and (in 2006) January 24.

Application forms, which must be fully completed by each individual applicant, are available from The Catenian Association (Bursary Fund), Floor 2, 1 Cophall House, Station Square, Coventry, CV1 2FY or downloaded from <http://www.thecatenianassociation.org/bursary>

Leo Simmonds
Chairman, Catenian Bursary Fund
City of Westminster Circle

Raising the Profile

Sir - A selection of the photographs from Bursary Fund recipients that you were so kind as to let me have, has been incorporated into the Microsoft Presentation Programme which will be used in the entrance hall of the Gracie Fields Theatre in Rochdale, where the concert given by the Young Musician of the Year 2000 will take place; thus linking the achievement of youth as applied to the arts and to the kind of social work provided by our people funded through our bursaries. The display will be prominent and will be positioned to be seen by all the members of the audience. My aim is to raise the profile of both the Catenian Association and its Bursary Fund. By sponsoring the concert and increasing the regular audience by about forty or fifty percent we shall be seen to have made a difference, and hopefully, Catholics in the audience might be prompted to enquire further.

Again it is hoped that the local press will be involved, though this cannot be certain until the day. In any event, the occasion will be graced by the Mayoral presence and the attendance of the local MP as well as other dignitaries in the town.

A party made up of some of the Catenians, wives and families will attend a sherry reception before the performance and a buffet supper afterwards.

The event will have provided funds of at least £1000 for the Rochdale Music Society; at least a hundred extra members in the audience from a catchment area wider than the usual geographical vicinity; as well as extended publicity for the Association and the Bursary Fund by gracious permission and co-operation of the Society.

We are indebted to you for the photographs and to Sean O'Connell who provided the computerised basis for the continuously projected display,

R F Doran
Bury and Rossendale Circle

Without My Consent

Sir - On Page 19 of the November 2004 issue you print a paper about the Assisted Dying Bill. I make no comment on the text, but you should correct the claim that this is a summary of the 'Association's Submission.

The Association is not the Chairman of the PAC (Public Affairs Committee) nor is it the 30 or so brothers who we have elected to run our affairs as Grand Council. The Association is the membership, 10,000 strong, and that membership has had no part to play in this submission. We might want our Association to become an arm of Catholic action, but we need to be asked; our agreement cannot be assumed. We might be prepared to elect the PAC Chairman as our spokesman, but to do that we have to vote; until we do so, the election cannot be taken for granted. We might support the view which the PAC Chairman has formulated, but we need to agree that this view can go forward in our name, otherwise the claim that it is our submission is without foundation.

This letter has nothing to do with my Province or my Circle. This is merely me, John Bishop, objecting to anyone pretending to represent me without my knowledge or consent. I did not join the Association on the understanding that this would happen. I will speak for myself when necessary, and I prefer not to have words put into my mouth. I would ask those who share my concern to remind our Directors that we, their brothers, are the Association they have been elected to serve, and to require them to defend our right to control our affairs. Urgent action must be taken to ensure that our collective name is not taken in vain again, and that the PAC remains silent until we, the Association, have considered a formal proposal and made our decision.

John Bishop
Cambridge Circle

Ladies Group

Sir - The wives of City of Bristol Circle have recently formed a ladies group called "The Link". To date we have only had meetings over lunch but we wish to investigate possibly expanding our activities. I believe that some circles have well established associated ladies groups and I wonder if I can use *Catena* as a means to get in contact with them to find out the activities which they have found to be most successful.

A letter to my home address would be greatly appreciated: Parklands, Abbotsleigh Road, Leighwoods Bristol BS8 3PX

Shirley Burling