



Rochdale Welcome Jim Dobbin KSG MP to the Association

Rochdale Circle were delighted to welcome Jim Dobbin KSG MP into the circle in September last year. Jim was born in Kincardine on Forth, Fife, Scotland, the son of a coal miner, and educated at the Catholic St Columba's High School, Cowdenbeath, and the Catholic St Andrew's High School, Kirkcaldy.

He later went to Napier College, Edinburgh, where he studied Bacteriology and Virology. He worked as a microbiologist within the NHS for 33 years until 1994, mainly at the Royal Oldham Hospital.

He was elected chairman of the Rochdale Constituency Labour Party for a year in 1980. In 1983 he was elected as a councillor in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, becoming the Labour group leader in 1994, and became the leader of the council in 1996. He stepped down from both the National Health Service and the council at Rochdale on his election to the House of Commons at the 1997 general election for Heywood and Middleton and has been an MP there ever since. He has been a member of the European Scrutiny Select Committee since 1998.

Jim has chaired the all-party Pro Life Group and was awarded the Papal



Pictured here are Ann and Rochdale Circle President John Welsh; Jim Dobbin KSG MP; Fr David O'Kane; Billy Sheerin, Jim's sponsor; and Membership Officer Brian Lillis

Knighthood of St Gregory in July 2008. He is married to Pat and they have two sons and two daughters.

About his award, Jim said, "It is in recognition of the work done here and in the House of Commons on behalf of the Church and pro-life issues. I've been working hard over the years on legislation ranging from the Mental Health Capacity Bill to the current Human Fertilisation Bill. I'm astounded because I didn't know I was getting this award. It's an honour to be recognised and I feel very humble."

"Many MPs in Parliament past and present have endeavoured to protect

life from conception to natural death and I have always been open and honest about my support for these issues.

"As science progresses, these very difficult ethical debates will become more complex. There has to be stricter regulation to protect society from the unknown dangers that we may face as a result of scientific development where scientists are pushing boundaries and the biotech industry is making huge profits."

On joining the Catenians Jim said he was honoured to have been asked to join an Association which treasures the values of Catholicity, family life and friendship.

Essential Role

The importance of the family was further highlighted during the visit last year by our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, to the Holy Land. In Nazareth, the home of the Holy Family, Pope Benedict stated, "In the family, each person, whether the smallest child or the eldest relative, is valued for himself or herself, and not seen simply as the means to some other end. Here we begin to see something of the essential role of the family as the first building block of a well ordered and welcoming society. We also come to appreciate..... the duty of the state.....to protect the institution of the family and its inherent rights, and to ensure that all families can live and flourish in conditions of dignity".

Appropriate Strategy

As individuals in an Association which has as one of its central tenets, the support and development of our families, surely we too share those responsibilities so clearly identified by Pope Paul VI. One cannot help but remember the response of Cardinal O'Brien who, in answer to the renewed attempts to legalize euthanasia, called for opponents of assisted suicide to fight under the slogan "Don't kill your Granny". It is an appealingly direct slogan at a time when Keir Starmer, the Director of Public Prosecutions, is considering his guidelines on the circumstances in which he would, or would not bring a prosecution against someone assisting in the suicide of someone in England or Wales, both within these countries and overseas. Is it not also an appropriate strategy for us as individuals as we look towards the coming general election which will help to shape the future in our country?

Brother Seymour Spencer's 90th Birthday Parties

Seymour joyously invites his Catenian Brothers and their ladies to one or more of the following celebrations of his 90th birthday, with Mass followed by refreshments:

- **Tuesday 4th May, Corpus Christi Church, Headington, Oxford, 12 noon**
- **Wednesday 5th May, St James' Church, Spanish Place, London, 6pm**
- **Thursday 6th May, Corpus Christi Church, 7pm (for Catenians and others)**
- **Saturday 8th May, Ampleforth Abbey, Yorkshire, 12 noon**

Please let him know which occasion/s you would like to attend. He asks for no presents ("could be overwhelming") but a charitable donation if you wish. Seymour would be grateful also if anyone who is coming would let him know their name/s and circle number for catering purposes.

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