

GRAND PRESIDENT

Extracts From Grand President's Centenary Address

God Bless Both You and Your Families

Brothers, our wait is over, the long anticipated day has arrived and we can now celebrate together the culmination of 100 years of Catenianism worldwide, which started with the vision of two great men, Bishop Louis Casartelli, Bishop of Salford and our Founder Grand President John O'Donnell.

I fulfilled my own personal commitment to my year as your Grand President by visiting the graves of these two great visionaries on Thursday afternoon and I found it profoundly uplifting and I am sure that the strength I gained from that visit will enable me to offer my heart and soul to serve you in this very important year ahead.

Brothers, we have the most wonderful opportunity in this our Centenary year to build on the solid foundations provided by our forefathers. They have shown us that the values expressed by Bishop Casartelli in his speeches are still valid in this our modern world where our faith and moral values are constantly under attack.

I would like to thank my colleagues on Grand Council for their confidence in my ability to lead the Association and I would also like to place on record my admiration for the hard work and total dedication given to the Association by those who serve as Directors and Officers of Grand Council. Unless you have actually served with them, it is impossible to appreciate the amount of time and unpaid effort that is given each year by each member of Grand Council.

I would now like to pay tribute to my predecessor Brother Phil Gidman who took on the task of The Year of Preparation as a challenge and has fulfilled that task with great good humour and hard work.

We also say farewell today to Past Grand President John Clarke who has served on Grand Council for the last 10 years and had an excellent year as Grand President. He also worked tirelessly as Chairman of the Centenary Committee to deliver this very special year. We also say goodbye today to Brother Don McKechnie the Director for Province 20 in Western Australia.

Finally I would like to pay a well earned thank you to Brother Tony Bannister who is retiring as Grand Treasurer after three years. We welcome Brother Phil Roberts as our new Grand Treasurer.

I would also like to pay a personal thank you to our Head Office team led by our excellent Grand Secretary Jim Quinn and our wonderful staff led by



our Administrator Jai Milward, who are always there to help an absentminded Grand President who has forgotten to do something important.

I would also like to especially thank the members of the Manchester Liaison Committee under the Chairmanship of my good friend Brother Frank Hinds who have put so much hard work into making the weekend what is proving to be a truly memorable time. To all the stewards and helpers from Provinces 1 and 17 thank you for all your time and effort in helping all of us to enjoy ourselves.

There is a buzz and sense of anticipation in this Conference today and I would like to tap into that energy by asking you to welcome our Overseas Brothers who make such an important contribution to our Association. I would like to ask all our visiting Brothers from Australia, Malta and Ireland to stand and could conference please show their appreciation with a warm welcome for our Overseas Members who have travelled so far to be with us today.

Brothers I have a vision for this Association as we go forward in our Centenary Year, a vision that involves two very special words CARING and INVOLVEMENT.

I joined this Association 21 years ago, at a time when I was working seven days a week seeing very little of my family and being a one day a week Catholic. I was

introduced to the Catenians by Giovanni Fabrizi and one of my two sponsors Paddy Costello is here today and my grateful thanks to those two Brothers who changed my life so dramatically.

The most important changes in my life and that of my family was the exposure to people like yourselves, who were committed Catholics who by your kindness and friendship taught me to be a better Catholic, a better husband, a better father and instead of salving my conscience by giving a cheque to send a child to Lourdes with HCPT, I became involved with the Charity.

Amongst those many good friends who took me under their wings when I first joined the Association, were two of my predecessors as Grand President, John Tominey, who encouraged and inspired my interest in developing membership of the Association and Terry McGrath who taught me that total commitment to the Association, could be fun and that wonderful friendships would result from that commitment. These very special men, whilst being very different in nature, shared one very important ability, which was to encourage and harness enthusiasm in new Brothers, nothing was too much trouble. They would always pick up the phone and offer advice and encouragement even though they led very busy lives. They were both a fine example of what a true Catenian should be - A MENTOR.

I have been fortunate to have met many people in my life who have helped me, by directing and channelling my enthusiasm, to achieve the role of Grand President. In my early days one of the older members of my Circle, Tom Moran and his wife Kathleen adopted Kathleen and me as friends. They showed a wonderful generosity of spirit and Tom is here today at the age of 92, still with a love of life and ready to offer words of advice and wisdom, which have helped me over the last 21 years, Tom thank you for the friendship and love that you and your wonderful wife Kathleen of blessed memory have given to myself and my Kathleen, you are always in our hearts and prayers.

If every Catenian could offer this support to every new Visiting Gentleman our Association would grow even faster than it has in recent times. We are trying to introduce Good Practice Guides, which are already in operation in many Circles and Provinces around the world. We hope that all Circles will remember that a New Brother is the most important asset both to the Circle and to the Association.

All new Officers need a mentor in their first year whether President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Officer, Chamberlain or other offices. Why not ask a past Circle President to advise and encourage the new officers in their development, it can really make a difference. By assisting and encouraging new officers in their duties, we can ensure a smooth transition from one year to the next.

MEMBERSHIP

Many of you will know that my abiding passion and joy is promoting membership of the Association. I feel it is my duty to ensure that every Catholic man, who meets the criteria of our membership rules, should be offered the opportunity to join our organisation. In the past we have hidden behind a veil of secrecy and elitism, we are slowly, but surely taking steps to let the Catholic world know what we have to offer.

When I joined Grand Council, Grand President Robin Oakley-Smith appointed me to the Membership Committee and the Chairman Brother Jim Kelly asked me to take on the role of UK Membership Development Officer. I produced for Grand Council a paper outlining what was needed to produce at least one new Circle a year in the UK and introduced the slogan FAITH - FAMILY - FRIENDSHIP. The most important factor in the development of this plan was the inspirational idea of Bro Jim in teaming me with Brother Sean O'Connell as UK Membership Officer.

We introduced the idea of having regular meetings of Provincial Membership Officers as a forum to exchange new developments and offer assistance where required. We also introduced the Provincial Road-Shows to enable Circle Membership Officers and other interested parties to develop their recruiting skills, and the Pulpit Presentations reaching out to those who would otherwise never learn about our organisation. New Leaflets were produced that embodied our ideals of Faith, Family, Friendship and with the addition of Fun, doing away with the words Professional & Business to sweep away the last vestiges of elitism.

The new slogan came about as a result of a pulpit presentation I did at the invitation of Epping Forest Circle, when the Parish Priest

Fr John Harvey preached on the love and sacrifice made by St Maximilian Kolbe when he offered his life in place of others. I spoke as I usually do, not on the virtues of the Association, but on the gift of friendship, the most valuable gift that one person can offer to another, and that a friendship based on faith was twice blessed as it would strengthen our faith. After the Mass I went to dinner with Fr John and several members of the Circle and he said 'Why do you not adopt a slogan around Strengthening Catholic Family Life through Faith and Friendship?' I would like to offer my personal thanks to Brother Phil Harris for all his hard work as Chairman of the Marketing Committee, his sterling work on the CAFOD Water Project and the Vocations Masses Project.

The results of the Development Plans have been evident in that over the last six years we have seen the opening of seven new Circles in the UK plus four Groups and more to come. Membership is rising as more and more Circles realise the benefits of reaching out into the parishes to let Catholic men know what we can offer to them and their families.

We cannot however rest on our laurels, we must use this our Centenary to publicise our Association to both Clergy and Laity alike. I am asking each Brother, whatever his age or length of service, to find within his or his wife's circle of family, friends, work colleagues, and parishioners, one name which can be anywhere in the 'Catenian World'. It is very easy to dismiss a member of one's family or a friend because they live in another part of the country or even abroad. Next month in Catena there will be a card to enter the name, address and phone number of your prospective member, together with a note of your name and Circle. The card when received by Head Office will be distributed to Provincial Membership Officers, who will pass them out to the Circles and monitor progress. Regular progress reports will appear in Catena to show the development of this initiative.

A new brochure has been produced for our Centenary Year aimed at letting our clergy know the real facts about our wonderful Association. We are asking all Circles to deliver by hand a brochure to each parish in their area, so that all priests can learn about the benefits that can be offered to their parishioners through membership.

I would also exhort all Provinces to continue to look for opportunities to develop new Groups and Circles within their areas as this will encourage organic growth within the rest of the Province. I would ask each Circle to examine their records and look at the list of Brothers who have lapsed or resigned. There may have been a very good reason at the time - work, family, personal reasons and

circumstances may have changed. In the spirit of our Centenary and Brotherhood I would ask each Circle to bring back into the fold one member to join and celebrate our Centenary. I have also arranged for a special Centenary Membership Certificate to be produced for each new member who joins in the Centenary year. This will be personally signed by me and I hope to attend as many enrolments as possible, particularly where there are multiple enrolments.

We must embrace potential members from every cultural and ethnic background to ensure that we benefit from their devotion to their faith which has so enhanced our Association in recent years. In my own parish of St Monica's Palmers Green, we now have nearly 100 Catenians, mainly younger, from every ethnic and working group, who share the one common and universal bond that they are proudly Catholic and I am so pleased that many of them are here today. Many of you will have seen the letter from our priest Father Roger Taylor in Catena where he mentioned the sense of community that the Catenians had brought to the parish by uniting the young people and their families, regardless of their work or cultural background and that is how we can develop the Association by using the words Creating a Sense of Community.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The continued growth in Australia and Malta and hopefully Ireland is very exciting. It is becoming increasingly apparent to Grand Council that there are many areas of the world where the churches and parishes and people have heard of us and want a part of us, in India and in Africa particularly. It is my wish and the fulfilment of much that I have worked for as a Catenian to answer these calls positively.

For the past 25 years or more it can be said, our Association has grown slowly - by a small group of Catenians, finding themselves in a new place together and wanting to maintain their Catenian life and working to found a Circle. But that is not what happened 100 years ago, and 90 years ago. The 1914 Directory contained the names of over 1500 members, all from 14 original members here in Manchester in 1908. It was an incredible achievement.

Should development in India or Africa mirror the rapid expansion that witnessed the start of our Association? Should we press for development in each of the states of Australia? Whatever we have been doing in the past decade or more has resulted in very positive moves from around the globe seeking a part of what we have got. Grand Council is faced with the problems of so organising this potential that it does not damage us but benefits both the new members and the old.

So in this Centenary Year, the year to witness 100 years of following Christ's demands, we have choices to make that could set our Association on a course that will take it out of being essentially a British Group and set it towards a full International vocation.

Whilst talking about our International Development, I would ask all Circles to redouble their prayers for our Brothers in Zimbabwe, that they may achieve the peace and leadership they need to survive the violence and tragedy that have affected them so grievously.

YOUNG PEOPLE

This is our time, the moment when we can build on the success of the Bursary Fund, the marvellous work done by our tireless Charity Officer Brother John Hall and the Bursary Committee led by Brothers Leo Simmonds and Peter Martin. We should work hard to raise more funds as our resources have been heavily depleted recently through the ever-growing numbers of applications from those young Catholics who by their very generosity of spirit are those who will be the foundations of our Church in future years. You, Brothers, and your families, can help to build our faith by showing your own generosity of spirit that you care as Catenians and Catholics for our young people. If we are to maintain the growth and stability of our Association, we must try to make the Catenians stand out as beacons of hope to them, when they are trying to find their way on their journey of faith and life.

A more evangelical approach to young Catholic family men, is to befriend them when they are taking their first faltering steps back to the Faith after marrying a good Catholic girl and starting a family. They often start coming back to church because they want their children baptised and then to go to Catholic schools. This is the time when they often meet old school friends and as part of my Welcoming Ministry in the parish I work with the Parish Team to introduce young families, both new and old together. If we are prepared to reach out to young people with the hand of friendship and understand the pressures of life they are under, then maybe we can capture their hearts and minds for our Faith and our Association.

GIVE WATER, LIFE AND HOPE

The original initiative for this project, which was the result of input from members, was launched by Grand President Philip Gidman in his address to the Conference in Cardiff. At his request I visited the offices of Cafod last September and they explained to me that the most urgent need was a request that had just been received from the Archbishop of Bulawayo for Water/Sanitation for that area which was in desperate need of clean water.

As a result of that visit and the first hand experiences Bro Philip and his touring party to Zimbabwe found, a proposal was put to Grand Council and the rest is history.

My aim is to raise £250,000 in the Centenary Year through your generosity and to assist our Brothers and the people of Zimbabwe to rise from their poverty stricken land and to find "an Oasis of Hope" where a well brings both life and a future.

FAITH

The most important element and foundation of our Association, as Bishop Casartelli declared "in the history of the church, the twentieth century will eventually be known as the century of the laity." Casartelli's vision of "the organized participation of the laity in the hierarchical apostolate of the church" was further expressed in his farsightedness of being the episcopal patron of 'The Chums', encouraging them to develop as "the faithful laity in the defence of the church, in the promotion of her interests and in the 'pacific penetration' by means of their example and intellectual influence, of the society in which they live".

These words are even more relevant today when the very tenets of our faith are being attacked daily, we must stand firm and support our clergy and those in political office. The Right to Life, both for the unborn and for those with terminal illness is sacrosanct and we should fight with all our might.

I feel that Faith is a very personal thing. We are a broad Church, with very different opinions on a variety of subjects. We have a very good channel of education through our Public Affairs Committee led by its Chairman Past Grand President Jim Kelly who, through his articles, keeps us informed of the most important issues facing us today.

We have the Catenian Vocations Initiative, a group of men whose work in raising awareness, both within the Association and in the parishes around the country has been an example to us all. Each Circle has a Mass once a year for Vocations and we pray for Vocations at each Circle meeting. In addition I have asked each new Circle President to try to arrange a Mass at each parish in their area on our Patronal Feast Day 29th June.

The response has been marvellous; these Masses are being celebrated, not only in countries where we are represented, but all over Africa, India, Europe and America, even in Bethlehem and St Peter's Rome. We have at least 1500 Masses being celebrated on that day around the world. Imagine the powerful impact that celebration will have on people's hearts and minds; the Holy Spirit will surely listen to such a plea.

However it is also important to remember as our Ecclesiastical Advisor Bishop John Arnold said at his first dinner at Grand Council in response to a question on involving our Association in more Catholic action. "For nearly one hundred years you have offered a haven where busy committed Catholics can rest and recharge their batteries; think carefully before you change the very nature of your organisation".

Brothers let us continue to offer advice through the PAC, let us continue to support the work for Vocations, let us as individuals give support and service to our Hierarchy. We should encourage and assist Brothers to join Serra Movement and work more directly for Vocations, to join the Catholic Union and become more involved in the fight for our Catholic principles but Brothers, let us not become a Catholic Action organisation, rather let us become 10,500 Soldiers of Christ working in our homes, our workplace, education and parishes to show by our example and support that we are proudly Catholic.

COMMUNICATION

Finally Brothers I come to the matter of Communication. We have an excellent magazine produced by our good friend Gil Whale and his first class team for which we thank him most sincerely. We also have a new Website which offers us tremendous opportunities to communicate to both our Brothers and the outside world; and we have the Agenda insert in Catena which gives a full insight into the work of Grand Council and its Working Groups. We can use this year to make a difference in both the Association and the Catholic world.

If we can let the world know what a wonderful caring organisation we are, then we will surely be blessed with more members who would like to join an organisation like ours.

Finally I must thank my very special wife Kathleen who has for the last 43 years given me the love and support that has been the anchor in achieving this high office, without her none of this would have happened and without her I am nothing.

Brothers I would like to thank you for your time today, for your friendship in the past and the times to come. I ask for your prayers for Kathleen and myself in this coming year, that we may have the strength and fortitude to serve you. We will do everything in our power to spread the words of our motto to Strengthen Family Life through Friendship and Faith - May God Bless both you and your families in the coming year.

THE LIFE and TIMES of GRAND PRESIDENT DAVID TAYLOR



David was born in 1942 in Enfield, North London to Arthur and Mae Taylor. His father was a cost accountant and later became one of the first members of the British Computer Society, very much a pioneer of the early production control systems. David went to the local Catholic primary school, Our Lady of Mount Carmel & St George, and then on to Enfield Grammar School rather than the local Jesuit school, St Ignatius, 'where my mother wanted me to go'. At school, David tended to be more interested in sports and other youthful pursuits rather than working hard and did not have a very distinguished academic record until after he married.

On leaving school he started in the Legal Department of the Pearl Assurance Head Office and subsequently moved to The Australia & New Zealand Bank. In 1962, he became a trainee salesman with a company called George Anson and thus put his feet firmly on the path which he has followed all his working life.

In 1963 he joined Elliott Business Machines as a trainee salesman and worked his way up after 12 years to Dealer Sales Manager. In 1975 he set up his first company with one of his salesmen to sell addressing machines at a time when inflation was rampant.

After initial high times, they built a very successful business, until his first retirement in 1990. After a period of voluntary work, firstly working with the late Past Grand President John Tominey and his marvellous team of the Friends of HCPT, he then went to work at Westminster Cathedral where, at the request of Auxiliary Bishop Pat O'Donoghue, he set up a Guild of Volunteers and a Guild of Oblates which still flourish today.

In 1993 he was approached by two of his ex-employees to set up a second business, from which he retired in 1997 due to ill health. Since then David has taken on various consultancy roles and still enjoys a full working week.

David says he was fortunate enough to meet his future wife Kathleen, a nurse from Co Galway in 1962, when they were dancing, an activity which has always had a special place in their lives. They married in September 1965 in the same parish in which David's parents married in 1940. They were blessed with four lovely children, Susan (1968), Angela (1970), Nichola (1972) and Andrew (1975). After he was married David studied for membership of the Institute of Marketing and also gained his HNC in Business Studies and subsequently won a Mature Student Scholarship but was unable to take up the offer because of the birth of his first child.

Susan married in 1992 in Our Lady of Mount Carmel & St George, the same church as both her parents and grandparents, and she and her husband Joe will be in Manchester with their children Sasha and Daniel. Angela married in 1998 and will be flying in from San Diego, unfortunately without their children Jacob and Olivia who will be at school. Nichola married in 2000 and she will be at Manchester with her husband Craig and their eldest child Jack; the youngest grandchild Ella will be a little too small to enjoy the Conference. Lastly, Andrew, who lives at home, will also be joining David and Kathleen, as will two of their nephews, one with his wife, and also Kathleen's sister Lorretta.

Having been a one day a week Catholic, working seven days a week in his business, David found his spiritual home in the Catenian Association when, in December 1986, he joined London North West Circle. In August 1987, he joined London Northern Heights and Southgate Circles and in April 1988 he became President of

Southgate. They did not tell him until after his arm was twisted that the Circle were celebrating their 50th Anniversary and 600th Meeting in his year. In 1989 he became Provincial Membership Officer and went on to serve six years. In 1992 he became President of London North West Circle and, in 1994, he was the Founder President of Highgate Circle.

David has always had a great passion for Membership matters and was able to assist in the formation of Bishops Stortford Circle in 1995 where he was a founder member; North London Circle in 2003; and London North East Circle in 2007, in both of which he was a Founder Member.

He became Provincial President of Province 14 in 1999 and followed Past Grand President Robin Oakley-Smith as Director in 2002. He served as Secretary and Chairman of the Membership & Rules Committee and also as UK Membership Development Officer.

David's life outside the Catenian Association revolves around the family and his beloved parish of St Monica's in Palmers Green. He has been a Reader and Eucharistic Minister for 20 years. He has served as Chairman of the Parish Fundraising Committee and has been an active Welcomer for the last 10 years. The parish family is a weekly tonic to him and they now have nearly 100 members in the parish. He was appointed a member of the Equestrian Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre in 1990 and a Papal Knight of the Order of St Gregory in 2001. The greatest privilege he had was to be part of the team that staged the Jubilee Mass at the NEC in 2000 when 10,000 Catholics attended a Mass concelebrated by Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor and most of the hierarchy. David served 10 years as a Governor of Bishop Douglass secondary school and two years on the board of Vita Pax, a Catholic Independent school. He spent four years with Serra, the vocations organization and five years working with Bishop Victor Guazzelli, Auxiliary in Westminster, doing his books once a month.

Says David, "The Catenian Association taught me to be a better husband, a better father and above all a better Catholic. The members have shown me a marvellous example and for that, and all the wonderful friendship that they have given Kathleen and me, I thank each and every one of you who have so enriched our lives."