

18 December 2009

To all Circle/Group Secretaries and Provincial/Area Secretaries

Dear Brother Secretary,

Agenda 13 has been published with December Catena to update you and your brothers as to what has gone on at Grand Council at the beginning of November. The purpose of this letter is to send to you the various matters, documents, information and advice that you need in your hands as hard copy. If it is that you are handing over your responsibilities then I hope that this letter will be of value to your successor.

1) Principal Officers for 2010/11

- a) Bro Vernon DeCruz KCHS, Director of Province 19 and a member of Woking Circle was elected as Grand President
- b) Bro Tony Godden KCHS Director of Province 16 and a member of Edinburg St Andrews Circle and West Lothian (St Mary's) Circle was elected as Grand Vice-President
- c) My three year term of office comes to an end in May. The Board set up by Grand Council to interview and recommend who should be Grand Secretary is now not due to report until the Meeting of Grand Council on 12th February when Grand Council will elect Grand Secretary for the next three years.

2) Voting Results

- a) The voting returns from Secretaries were concluded on 26th November. I have had to delay a little in reporting on the vote as it was necessary to verify a few of the votes. That verification process was completed on 15th December.
- b) The result of the vote is that all the resolutions put to Circle Councils and to the Members of Circles were passed with a substantial majority above the required 2/3rd majority. The detailed result broken down by Circle and Province will be available to each Provincial Director in the New Year and will be published on the Web Site as soon as they are ready.
- c) In particular the vote in respect of the increased capitation fee received a vote in favour close to 90%. Accordingly will you please alert your Circle Treasurer that the Capitation Fee from 1st April 2010 will be £32.

3) Information and Communication Technology ('ICT')

a) Update on our Database and Web Portal

- i) In my letter in December last year I reported on the new central database and web portal that had 'gone live' on 1st December 2008. 12 months later I had hoped that I would be able to report that everything was fine and working smoothly. Regretfully I am unable to do so.
- ii) We are currently exploring some areas of difficulty in the way in which the information contained in the Database is reported. Gill Gregory our Senior Administrator has been in regular contact with Centrepont to explore and fix the difficulties that have been reported to us.
- iii) The interface between the Web Portal and the database was changed on 13th November when a regular update was installed by Centrepont. The change had a consequence that was not intended. As a result some Circles found some peculiarities when filing their voting returns on the Web Portal after 13th November. Centrepont identified the difficulties very quickly and fixed them on 23rd November. However, we were nervous that the results that we had received were entirely accurate. 27 Circles had filed their voting returns via the Web Portal during the period 13th to 23rd November. We therefore asked each of those Circles if they would verify the results that we had recorded. We heard from all Circles on or before the appointed date to enable the announcement above to be made.
- iv) Centrepont has agreed that I should include in this letter the following statement:

Although some of you have had difficulties and problems in reporting on the votes cast last month, that problem has been resolved and fixed by Centrepoint. Further on 18th December they are providing us with an enhancement that should improve the ease with which reports are obtained. We have agreed that there will be a review meeting with Centrepoint early in the New Year and I will report the findings of that meeting.

b) Email addresses

- i) We are pursuing the investigations to identify whether there is a stable and robust route available to increase the flow of information from Grand Council/Head Office by way of email. I expect that a report and proposal will be put to Grand Council in February. In the meantime I am very grateful to all Provincial/Area Secretaries who have already helped in transmitting information by this route. Many of you have asked that this facility be used if possible.

c) Web Portal – technical

- i) May I make one point of importance in your use of the web portal. It is necessary that when you have finished making amendments on any individual page that you click on 'update'. Then a message telling you that the update has been accepted will appear on your screen. You need to do this on each page before changing pages even though you may remain in the edit programme for the same brother etc.

d) Web Portal - Directories

- i) We are approaching Directory time. The information in the Directory will be the information as to your Circle that has been added to our database via the Web Portal. You are therefore in direct control of all that appears in the Directory.
- ii) As mentioned above, there have been difficulties in inputting information via the Web Portal . This has been the subject of correspondence between the Association and Centrepoint our suppliers. At Head Office we have been testing the system with help from Bros Phil Harris and Anthony Phillips and have been reporting our findings to Centrepoint. They have been making some changes to the system and are providing us with an update today. We will test this before the Christmas break. If you find any difficulties can you please email a report to Gill Gregory at senadmin.catena@btconnect.com
- iii) So that the work on the Directory can be finalised, we need any changes via the Web Portal to be completed by Monday 8th February 2010. Changes after that date are unlikely to be reflected in the next Directory.

4) Handbook & Manual of Procedure: these are available at Head Office at a cost of £2.50 each. We have a good supply in stock for immediate delivery. Most Circles regard it as an important matter to provide all new brothers with a copy of the manual. Its value lies not just in the ritual for various meetings but also for the wealth of advice and suggestions that are made throughout the volume as to the best practice way of running each level of the Association.

5) Registers are available in Head Office at a cost of £45 inc p&p. Payment is required in advance of shipment for these.

6) All Stationary is available on the Website for downloading. Whilst we will send printed copies if requested by brothers, we no longer commission printers to produce the stationary.

7) Membership cards. We no longer produce membership cards each year. Membership cards are issued to each new brother when we are notified of his enrolment.

8) Conference at Bournemouth

- a) The Brochure and Booking Form will be with all members as an insert in Catena. If for some reason one of you brothers does not receive January Catena, could you ask him to notify Lorraine Gatehouse at Head Office membership.catena@btconnect.com
- b) This year all bookings for **tickets** will be sent to Bro David Lloyd of Kidderminster & District Circle. Bro David joined the Conference team last year at Harrogate and valuably performed sterling service as the friendly Booking Secretary at the Conference. We are most grateful to him in undertaking the full Booking Secretary duties this year (in addition to taking on the job of Provincial President Province 6 in April).

- c) Each brother is responsible for making his own booking with **the hotel** of his choice. .

9) Prayer for the Holy Land

- a) The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem His Beatitude Fouad Twal has made two recent visits to UK to draw attention to the plight, difficulties and diminishing numbers of the Christians in the Holy Land. In mid November he addressed the Bishops Conference of England and Wales on the subject. In September he visited Scotland where Cardinal Keith O'Brien introduced him to Grand Vice-President Elect Tony Godden. Tony outlined to him the nature and work of our Association and asked the Patriarch how we could help. He asked Tony if the brothers and their families would pray for the Christians in the Holy Land.
- b) Tony reported this to Grand Council who responded to the request by agreeing that it would communicate the request to brothers and ask that each Circle should consider whether to include in its discretionary prayers a bidding prayer. The following is suggested as appropriate particularly because The Patriarch has personally approved the words for our Association to use if it chooses:

To the people of the Holy Land we make this promise today. We will keep you all in mind, we will hold you in our prayer, we will be attentive to your needs. So may we, with Mother Church in Jerusalem, be a sign of reconciliation and peace in our divided world. Lord hear us

- c) What Grand Council did not decide was when or for how long this prayer should be said if adopted by any Circles. Perhaps that may be a good subject for debate within Circles or in the columns of Catena. Whatever is chosen, feedback to me will be much appreciated.

10) Meeting dates of the Association Charities

a) The Catenian Association Benevolent and Children's Fund

- i) 26th January; 23rd. March; 18th. May; 13th July; 14th. September; 23rd. November; and 25th January 2011.

b) The Catenian Association Bursary Fund

- i) 19th. January, 16th. March, 18th. May, 20th. July (this is also the AGM) and 21st. September

11) Vocations Initiative – support of the National Office for Vocation

- a) Again, may I ask for support for the National Office for Vocation. We are committed to support it to the extent of £3000 this year. That money is provided by voluntary contributions from Circles. So far we have managed to maintain this support for which the Bishops are most grateful.

12) National Press and Publicity Officer

- a) The position of National Press and Publicity Officer for a three-year term commencing at the beginning of May 2010 has been advertised in Catena. Up to the end of November no applications were received and therefore over the coming weeks there is still an opportunity for brothers to apply. This is an interesting and exciting job, particularly in working with more than 250 brothers already involved in press and publicity throughout the Association.
- b) Specific Responsibilities include:
- Provide a link to the national press and media and give 'publicity' to national events.
 - Identify and recommend events at which the Catenian Association would benefit by having a display and a presence.
 - Organise an annual meeting of Provincial Press and Publicity Officers.
 - Encourage Provincial Press and Publicity Officers to work closely with Circle Membership Officers.
 - Provide support to the Association outside the UK.
- c) Grand Council views this as important and challenging work which can make a significant contribution to the well-being and expansion of the Catenian Association. It is an opportunity for the successful applicant to meet brothers and make lasting contacts throughout the Association, in the Catholic hierarchy and in the wider Catholic community.

- d) If you know of any brother interested in this position, please ask him to write to Grand Secretary, The Catenian Association, 2nd Floor, Copthall House, Station Square, Coventry CV1 2FY. All applicants will be contacted within two weeks and a mutually convenient meeting will be arranged.
- e) For more information brothers interested in this position can call either Brother Phil Harris, Leicester South Circle on 01858 466219 or Brother John Ross, Knutsford Circle on 01625 861043.

13) Panjim Circle 353

- a) December Catena featured the inauguration of Panjim Circle - an historic moment in the Association. What was not reported is the difficulty that can be unwittingly incurred if any money or money's worth is sent to India. Frequently Circles generously contribute to a new Circle. If your Circle wishes to do so could you please email me at grandsec.catena@btconnect.com with details of what you are proposing so that I can try to advise you or get advice.
- b) India has very strict rules. The law is very stringent with respect to religious based foreign organisations particularly Christian organisations given that most are involved in missionary work. The Brothers in Panjim could find themselves in breach of the law arising out of your generosity.

14) Membership leaflets and Posters

- a) New posters and leaflets have been produced and/or reprinted.
 - i) The tri-fold membership leaflets are available to Provinces/Circles/Groups at £20 per 100.
 - ii) The small FAQ leaflets are also available at £20 per 100

If there is anything that I or our staff at Head Office can do to help you or your Circle please do let us know – preferably by email.

Gill, Lorraine, Lorraine, Judith and I take this opportunity to wish you a happy, holy, and relaxed Christmas.

Yours sincerely and fraternally



Jim Quinn

Grand Secretary