



THE CATHOLIC UNION

of Great Britain

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NEWSLETTER - MAY 2017

Dear Member,

Introduction and Staff News

May I first of all introduce myself as the newly-appointed Director of the Catholic Union of Great Britain and the Catholic Union Charitable Trust. The Council of the CUGB and the Trustees of the CUCT decided earlier this year to create a new part-time paid position of Director and I was appointed to that position at the beginning of March. The purpose is to increase the effectiveness of the CUGB and CUCT in their respective fields of activity and to improve their administration and communications. I report to the Chairman of the CUGB and to the Trustees of the CUCT.

I have been a Life Member of the Catholic Union since 2009 and joined the Council in 2015. I was elected Chairman of the Parliamentary and Public Affairs Committee in 2016. I am a barrister and served as a legal adviser at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for most of my career until I retired early in 2015. Although I visit the CU Office regularly, I generally work from home and please feel free to contact me directly at my personal address which is nigel.parker349@btinternet.com.

After many years loyal service in the office, Gaye and Noelle have retired and have been replaced by Marie and John who also work on Monday and Thursday mornings.

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 1 June: Lecture on Christians and other Persecuted Minorities in the Middle East

I enclose with this Newsletter a poster for the next CUCT lecture on 1 June. Please register and come to this lecture if you can and, if appropriate, you might like to ask your parish priest to put the poster on your parish noticeboard.

Saturday 15 July: Summer Gathering at Arundel Castle

Please note that this date has been changed from that advertised last year and I apologise for any inconvenience caused. An application form is enclosed and please note that we are limited to 50 people on this occasion.

Thursday 5 October at 6.30pm: Craigmyle Lecture

Baroness Scotland, former Attorney General and now Secretary-General of the Commonwealth has kindly agreed to deliver this year's lecture at our usual venue of Notre Dame University near Trafalgar Square. More details will be available nearer the time.

President: Sir Edward Leigh, MP

Vice-Presidents: Professor Lord Alton of Liverpool, Baroness Morris of Bolton OBE, Lord Clarke of Hampstead CBE, KSG, , Mr Jonathan Evans MP, Mr Robert Ffello MP, Professor John Haldane, Baroness Hollins, Dr Terence Morris, Mr John Deighan KSG, Mr Leo Simmonds KCSG

Thursday 16 November: CATHOLIC UNION AGM.

6.30pm at Vaughan House, Westminster Cathedral. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS DATE HAS CHANGED FROM THAT PREVIOUSLY ADVERTISED.**

Subscriptions and Membership

I have noticed that many of our members need to be reminded regularly to pay their annual subscriptions which causes additional work and expense for the office. It would be immensely helpful if members paid by standing order instead or even upgraded to life membership. Our new membership leaflet is enclosed with all the necessary details for paying by standing order and it also includes the latest subscription levels.

E-Mail Addresses

I understand that not everyone is in a position to use e-mail but if you do use e-mail, please let us have your address and keep it updated. We send regular News from Parliament, Events Briefings and other Briefings and this is by far the easiest and most economical way of keeping you informed of our activities (such as our recent submission to the General Pharmaceutical Council on freedom of conscience for pharmacists).

General Election on 8 June

Given the short notice of this election, we will not be printing another version of our April 2015 booklet "Restoring Faith in Public Life" but many of the issues raised remain relevant and could form the basis of questions to ask the candidates in your constituency.

Approach to public life and the issues of the day: Catholic teaching on the proper approach to public life ('the highest form of Charity' in the words of Pope Francis) includes the primacy of the use of the gift of reason, what St Thomas More recognised as the particular gift that God gave to humanity and on which he based his life as a Statesman. Will my candidate approach the issues of the day with appropriate seriousness and have the courage to exercise an informed and independent judgement or will he or she engage in spin or personal attacks or be guided by self-interest, emotion or ideology?

The Value of Human Life and Respect for it: Legislation proposing assisted suicide is likely to be introduced in the next Parliament and there may be an attempt to decriminalise abortion. How will your candidates vote?

Religious Freedom to act in accordance with Christian Values: Would your candidates support the freedom of Catholics to school their children according to their own religious and sexual ethics? Would they support "reasonable accommodation" in the workplace for those who conscientiously object to the redefinition of marriage?

Solidarity with Catholic social principles: How would your candidates show solidarity with the poor, hungry and refugees in the UK and abroad? What about human trafficking, housing and the treatment of the elderly? How might any of these issues be affected by the results of the Brexit negotiations?

Nigel Parker
Director

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