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## Newsletter – Spring 2018

Dear Member,

I hope that this Newsletter finds you well and on behalf of the Catholic Union I wish you all the joys of the Easter season. I hope that you enjoy reading the news below.

### **Summer Gathering – Saturday 30 June 2018 at Aylesford Priory, Kent**

The Summer Gathering this year will be held at Aylesford Priory (“The Friars”), an ancient Carmelite house and shrine which houses the relics of St Simon Stock. It is located in an idyllic setting by the River Medway and features several beautiful chapels and an outdoor rosary way decorated with wonderful ceramics by Polish artist and former WWII prisoner Adam Kossowski. See the attached booking form for more details and please do join us!

### **Other Dates for your 2018 Diaries:**

**Thursday 18 October** – The Craigmyle Lecture with Baroness Nuala O’Loan at Notre Dame University. Baroness O’Loan is a Catholic Crossbencher in the House of Lords. She was the first Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and has introduced a Bill in the House of Lords on Conscientious Objection for medical professionals.

**Thursday 15 November** – The Catholic Union Mass and AGM at Vaughan House, Westminster.

### **50% Admissions Cap on New Faith Schools**

Thanks to all our members who have kept up the pressure on this issue. We hope that the new Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, will announce the removal of the 50% cap in due course. Over 18,000 people have signed the Bishops Conference petition calling for an end to this policy which has in effect prevented the opening of new Catholic schools.

### **Submissions to the UK Government and to local authorities**

Our Parliamentary and Public Affairs Committee has been busy in the last three months discussing and making submissions to the Department for Education on Relationships and Sex Education (upholding the right of Catholic schools to teach these subjects in accordance with the Faith); to the Department of Health opposing the proposed “opt-out” scheme for Organ Donation (because “presumed consent” is not really consent in any meaningful sense); and to the Home Office and Lambeth and Ealing Councils opposing the proposed “buffer zones” outside abortion clinics (because such zones inhibit freedom of expression and police powers are already sufficient to deal with any legitimate complaints). Copies of all these submissions are available on our website, under ‘Briefing Papers’.

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*The Catholic Union of Great Britain: The Voice of Catholics in Public Life*

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, Professor John Haldane, Baroness Hollins, Dr Terence Morris,  
Mr John Deighan KSG, Mr Leo Simmonds KCSG

## **Campaigns**

I would like to draw to your attention a number of campaigns which you may like to support. They can be found at the following website addresses: [www.behereforme.org](http://www.behereforme.org) (supporting pro-life vigils outside abortion clinics; [www.mybodymygift.org.uk](http://www.mybodymygift.org.uk) (opposing “opt-out” organ donation); and [www.freeconscience.org](http://www.freeconscience.org) (supporting conscientious objection for medical professionals and Baroness O’Loan’s Bill which had its Committee stage in the House of Lords on 23 March and needs to be allocated more parliamentary time if it is to proceed further).

### **“Cakes, Conscience and Freedom” Lecture by Roger Trigg**

On 1 March 2018 Professor Roger Trigg gave an excellent lecture to around 40 people who braved the wintry weather on the subject of the interplay of freedom of religion and conscience with principles of equality and non-discrimination as exemplified by the Ashers Bakery case due to be heard in the Supreme Court in April. The outline of his lecture and a press release are available on the Catholic Union Charitable Trust website ([www.cuct.org](http://www.cuct.org)).

## **Future Development of the Catholic Union**

Our efforts continue to increase the membership, profile and activities of the Catholic Union. We have made visits to four university chaplaincies (London, Cambridge, Durham and Manchester) in the last two months and have gained a good number of students and young people as members as a result. Full-time students and those under 25 are entitled to become members free of charge. We are also looking at ways of increasing our income as membership subscriptions alone are not currently sufficient to sustain our present level of activities. We are increasing our contacts with Catholic parliamentarians and in April, the Chairman and Director have been invited to address the Catholic Legislators Network on the work of the Union. At the AGM held on 16 November 2017, members voted to adopt the amended Constitution and Rules of the Catholic Union which streamlines our structure and working methods. We also welcomed a number of new members to the Council.

## **Membership Matters**

May I repeat my plea to any members who use email but who have not given us their email address to please do so if you would like to hear more about what the Catholic Union is doing? The cost of mailings by post is prohibitive and therefore many of our membership briefings and news of our activities can be sent by email only.

Also, can you please check if you are an annual member and pay by standing order that your membership subscription is at the correct amount of £30 for individual members and £40 for joint members living at the same address? If not, we would be grateful if you would update your subscription to the correct amount or perhaps consider life membership.

Finally, please do get in touch with me about any matters concerning the Catholic Union and do let me know if you would like to get more closely involved in our work.

Yours faithfully,

**Nigel Parker**  
**Director**