

# THE CATHOLIC UNION

England | Scotland | Wales

## Annual Report for 2025

**The 146th Report for the period 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025  
for submission to the Annual General Meeting  
to be held at 5.00 pm on Tuesday 4 November 2025 at the  
London Jesuit Centre, 114 Mount Street, London W1K 3AY**



*With the light and the strength of the Holy Spirit, let us build a Church founded on God's love, a sign of unity, a missionary Church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the Word, allows itself to be made "restless" by history, and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity. Together, as one people, as brothers and sisters, let us walk towards God and love one another.*

Pope Leo XIV: homily from his Inaugural Mass celebrated in St Peter's Square on 18 May 2025.

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**Public Engagement by Catholics  
for the Common Good**



## President

*Dear friends*

I am delighted to be writing this introduction to the Catholic Union's 146th Annual Report. This year has been challenging and difficult at times. There is however cause for optimism especially with the election of Pope Leo XIV who has emphasised that the most severe form of poverty is the absence of God.

The Catholic Union continues to champion faith in public life. Mike Kane MP hosted a Parliamentary Reception in May and we were delighted that many newly elected MPs, in addition to re-elected MPs, were in attendance. All eyes will be on the House of Lords as the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill makes its passage through in the Autumn. My fellow Peers have a combined wealth of knowledge, wisdom and experience which will, I am confident, be put to the best use possible in demonstrating its dangers and if it cannot be defeated, amending it as best as we can.

My thanks to all who contacted their Members of Parliament about this bill, your contributions are greatly valued and it is both significant and heartening that the margin of MPs voting for the bill decreased since the initial vote last November showing how many remain concerned.

Supporting and encouraging lay Catholics in public life is right at the heart of the Catholic Union's being and we must cherish Pope Francis' gift of teaching us how to listen to one another, especially those different from ourselves.

It has been a privilege to meet so many members and supporters at our various events both in person and online. There is a strong programme lined up for the months ahead including the Craigmyle Lecture on 16 September with Lord Lemos who will speak about Catholicism for the Next Generation.

All of us are called to serve in some way and the Catholic Union will continue to try and support all those working in public life for the common good.

Thank you for your continued support.

## Baroness Hollins



## Chairman

The Catholic Union has had another busy and productive year thanks to the tireless commitment of our small team and many loyal volunteers. The battle against the Assisted Suicide legislation has taken up much of our capacity as it rightly should. I would like to thank everyone who has served in any way to help the Catholic Union to promote the teaching of the Church and advance the Common Good in our society. The Council thanks our Catholic parliamentarians, our President and Vice Presidents, for their leadership and inspirational witness in Public Life. Thank you all for your membership and generosity.

## Richard Collyer-Hamlin



## Episcopal Secretary, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

I was delighted to be asked to be the Ecclesiastical Adviser to the Catholic Union. The Catholic Union is well over 150 years old and has a proud tradition of being a strong voice for lay Catholics. The Catholic Union is undergoing something of a renaissance at the moment; it is well-organised in Parliament and heard in Government. I am particularly pleased that there is a warm, friendly, and professional relationship between the Catholic Union and the bishops and the staff of the two Bishops' Conferences. Long may it continue.

## Bishop Nicholas Hudson



## President of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland

I am happy to commend the good work of the Catholic Union over the past year. It was established in the nineteenth century to address the social challenges of the day and to allow the lay faithful the means of participating in debates around the common good of the country in a time of bewildering social change that saw the Church intervene with its first encyclical on Catholic social teaching of Pope Leo XIII. Our new Pope Leo XIV has recognised that the world is entering a similar time of unprecedented change, and the need for which the Catholic Union was set up in those times will be as pressing and relevant in the years to come as it was then. In that regard, the Scottish bishops were glad to have made fruitful connections with the Catholic Union in the past year and we look forward to increasing closeness of collaboration with the Union in working towards the integral development of our country in our times based on the wise foundation of Gospel values.

## Bishop John Keenan



## General Secretary of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland

Over the past two years the Bishops' Conference of Scotland has sought to engage with politicians both at Westminster and Holyrood by annual visits to both parliaments. The desire for greater involvement in the political and public square has been aided by the renewed friendship with the Catholic Union of Great Britain. This was evident at the warm reception hosted by the Union in April of this year in London for the Conference during its visit to Westminster. As the Union continues to reimagine itself at the service of the Church and as a valued voice for the laity, the Bishops' Conference of Scotland looks forward to continual engagement with Richard and all the team both in London and north of the border.

## Fr Gerard Maguiness

## Overview

Since last year's report, the world is a very different place. There is a new President of the United States, a new British government, and we have lost Pope Francis, who died on April 21. Pope Leo XIV has been elected and we look forward to the many blessings we hope his pontificate will bring. Given this changing global and social landscape, it seems more important than ever that Catholics can turn to an organisation like the Catholic Union to help keep them informed and understand how the teaching of the Church is such a valuable guide to the world today.

We live in the shadow of two votes in the House of Commons (Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill and the Crime & Policing Bill) which have the potential for enormous impact on society. There has also been turbulence surrounding the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill and challenges for Catholic schools. The work of Catholics in parliament and those groups which support them, like the Catholic Union, has never been more vital.

## Team

Last Summer, we said goodbye to James Somerville-Meikle, Deputy Director, after 5 years' service. James left with our gratitude and prayers as he entered the Seminary in Valladolid. Louisa Collyer-Hamlin, Head of External Affairs, has operated the Catholic Union in the absence of a Director. She is being supported by two consultants, Catherine Pepinster and Yvonna Raftopolous, who are working on a freelance basis. As part of our cost savings, the Jeddo Road office is being closed down and the administrative roles based there, carried out by John Ignoscia and James Coulborn, have been discontinued. We wish them well for the future. New software packages have been adopted in order to increase efficiency in management and communications. The Catholic Union team will be strengthened by the appointment of additional Vice Presidents before the end of 2025.

The Council expresses its great thanks to **Rev Canon Chris Thomas** who has retired as our Ecclesiastical Adviser after many years. We are delighted that Bishop Nicholas Hudson has been appointed as our new Ecclesiastical Adviser.

## New Vice Presidents

We were delighted to welcome four additional Vice Presidents at the 2024 AGM: The Lord Craigmyle, Dame Rachel de Souza DBE, Professor Anthony McClaran and Stephen Pound.



### Pope Francis RIP

The Catholic Union joined in the prayers of the Church in thankfulness for the life of the Holy Father and for the repose of his soul. Our president, Baroness Hollins, spoke to the BBC about the death of the Pope and the Chairman had a letter, commenting on his contribution to the life of the Church and the world, published by The Times.

## Assisted Suicide

By far the biggest issue that the Catholic Union has been tackling since the start of this new parliament is the introduction of The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, the private member's bill introduced by backbench Labour MP Kim Leadbeater, which plans to give terminally ill people the right to choose to end their life.

The bill's supporters say that it will be one of the most carefully policed bills of its kind, with those wanting to end their life having to be over 18, having the mental capacity to make the choice and be deemed to have expressed a clear, settled and informed wish, free from coercion or pressure. They would be expected to die within six months, and make two separate declarations, witnessed and signed, about their wish to die. They would have to satisfy two independent doctors that they are eligible - with at least seven days between each assessment.

As you know, assisted dying is anathema to the Catholic Church, whose teaching focuses on compassion and dignity for the sick. We had a very successful public meeting in late November at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in London's Farm Street, with speakers Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, the Paralympian, palliative care specialist Dr Matthew Doré, author and psychiatrist Professor Julian Hughes, and bioethicist Dr David Jones. The panel highlighted grave concerns over the bill and its risk of being a slippery slope to a form of euthanasia. We also held earlier this year another briefing session, this time via Zoom, enabling people well beyond London to hear from expert speakers.

The bill passed its Second Reading with 330 MPs supporting and 275 voting against. The bill passed its Third Reading with 314 MPs supporting and 291 voting against.

Considerable work has gone on behind the scenes too, facilitating meetings between experts on the issue and MPs. It has proved to be an immensely challenging time with the committee charged with scrutinising the bill going through it line by line and Catholic Union staff needing to keep up to speed with these changes. For example, since the initial vote, the high court's role in approving assisted deaths has been scrapped and replaced by a panel of experts. Additionally, the implementation period has been doubled to a maximum of four years for an assisted dying service to be in place.

## New Committee



Also important for our work in parliament is our **Parliamentary and Society Committee** (PASC) which reflects the priorities of our parliamentary work, namely issues such as the family. The first meeting was addressed by Dame Rachel de Souza DBE, the Children's Commissioner. Dame

Rachel is one of our Vice Presidents. The committee is made up of CEOs of leading Catholic charities and organisations.

## Selected news and highlights from the year

### September 2024

- Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Mark Choonara, Chief Executive Officer, Daughters of Charity Services, writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Catholic Union attends St Mary's University for a discussion between Prof Philip Booth and the veteran journalist Edward Stourton.



### October

- Raymond Friel OBE, Chief Executive Officer, Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN), writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Prof Peter Hindmarsh, Chair of the Catholic Union Charitable Trust, writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Cristina Gangemi, Director of The Kairos Forum, writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Bishop John Sherrington and Baroness Hollins addressed the CUGB's well attended AGM. Maggie Doherty, Director of the Centre for the Art of Living and Dying Well, delivered the keynote speech. Winners of the Catholic Young Writer Award were presented with prizes by Baroness Hollins.



### November

- Prof Tom Shakespeare gives 2024 Craigmyle Lecture, "Make a level path for my feet: disability equality, and love"
- Hannah Rich, Director of Christians on the Left, writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- John Pontifex, Head of Press and Public Affairs at Aid to the Church in Need, writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Catholic Union expert panel discussion: "Is the Assisted Suicide Bill about Compassion, Giving Choice and Dignity?" takes place at Farm Street Church
- Catholic Union attends Westminster Abbey where His Excellency Chris Trott, Ambassador to the Holy See, spoke about diplomacy and religion.



### December

- Chine McDonald, Director of Theos - "Talking God in Public" writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Former Catholic Union President, Lord Alton of Liverpool elected Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights.
- Christmas reflection for the Weekly Briefing is given by John Studzinski CBE.
- David Smith MP announced as UK Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief.



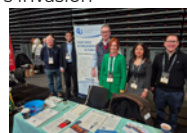
### January 2025

- Richard Harries, Director at Caritas Westminster, writes editorial for Weekly Briefing
- Catholic Union submits written evidence to the Terminally Ill Adults End of Life Bill Public Bill Committee
- Chairman has meetings with new Catholic MPs
- Dr Phil McCarthy writes editorial for Weekly Briefing – The 2025 National Jubilee Walking Pilgrimage of Hope
- Bishop Marcus Stock writes editorial for Weekly Briefing



### February

- Sarah Bareto, General Secretary, Catholic Independent Schools Conference (CISC) writes editorial for Weekly Briefing
- Brendan Metcalfe, CEO of Friends of the Holy Land writes editorial for Weekly Briefing
- Catholic Union attends service at the Ukrainian Cathedral to mark the 3rd anniversary of Russia's invasion
- Catholic Union hosts a stand at the Word on Fire conference
- Prof Peter Hindmarsh writes to all doctors encouraging them to correspond with their MP regarding the assisted dying bill
- Catholic Union attends the UK Commemorative Ceremony for Holocaust Memorial Day



### March

- Sir Stephen Timms MP writes editorial for Weekly Briefing
- Catholic Union pub talk with Andrew Hawkins, CEO of Whitestone Insight, chaired by Catherine Pepinster
- Chiara Finaldi, Catholic Mothers UK, writes editorial for Weekly Briefing
- Stefan Kaminski, Director of the Christian Heritage Centre, writes editorial for Weekly Briefing
- Catholic Union v UK Parliamentary Chess Team match in Portcullis House



### April

- Archbishop Leo Cushley shares homily reflecting on the pontificate of Pope Francis RIP
- The Catholic Union hosts a dinner (kindly sponsored by CCLA) for the eight Scottish bishops during their visitation to the UK Parliament
- Inaugural meeting of the Parliamentary and Society Committee
- Stefan Kaminski, Director of the Christian Heritage Centre, writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Catholic Union expert webinar: "Hard Cases Don't Make Good Law"

- Catholic Union pub talk with Stephen Pound chaired by Catherine Pepinster
- Julie Etchingham, Journalist, writes Weekly Briefing editorial



### May

- Ahead of Report Stage of the Terminally Ill Adults Bill, the Catholic Union briefs members on concerns about lethal drugs. Prof Julian Hughes has a letter published in the Times as do Chairman and President.
- Catholic Union expert panel discussion: "AI, Faith and Ethics at a Crossroads: Discerning the Way Forward" takes place at Farm Street Church
- Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski gives an Easter reflection in the Weekly Briefing
- Professor Sonia Kumar, Executive Dean of Medicine, School of Medicine, St Mary's University, writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Andy Keen-Downs CBE, CEO of Pact, writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Catholic Union holds Westminster Reception for Parliamentarians hosted by Mike Kane MP with guest speaker Charles Wookey
- Andrew Jackson, Chief Executive, Pax Christi England and Wales writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Professor Jackie Dunne, Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham Newman University writes Weekly Briefing editorial
- Catholic Union attends Installation Mass for new Archbishop of Liverpool



### June

- Christine Allen, Director of CAFOD, writes editorial for Weekly Briefing
- Bishop Brian McGee gives a reflection for Pentecost in the Weekly Briefing
- Catholic Union attends St Mary's University 175th anniversary celebrations
- Bishop Joseph Toal writes to Weekly Briefing readers on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul
- St Thomas More Circle Supporters and Benefactors gather for Mass at St Mary's Cadogan Street, Chelsea



### July

- Catholic Union pub talk with Andy Keen-Downs CBE chaired by Catherine Pepinster
- Catholic Union Summer Gathering at Worth Abbey to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Abbey Church
- Edward Reed, Chair, St Francis Leprosy Guild, writes editorial for Weekly Briefing
- Deacon John Fogarty, Stella Maris Regional Port Chaplain, writes editorial for Weekly Briefing
- Brendan O'Hara MP writes editorial for Weekly Briefing



## Connecting with the UK Parliament



Building relationships with these new MPs is key to our work. We do this in various ways, from alerting them to a constituency matter, for example a school in their constituency that has featured as ‘School of the Week’ in our Weekly Briefing or monitoring and contributing to debates in

Parliament. We met many of them at our parliamentary reception on May 21, when Charles Wookey, an expert on Catholic Social Teaching and business ethics, and a former adviser to Cardinals Hume, Murphy-O’Connor and Nichols, spoke. Mike Kane MP kindly hosted this event.

We have also maintained regular contact with former MPs, many of whom retain great interest in politics and important networks.

## 2024 General Election

The General Election last year led to considerable change with a new government and a large number of new MPs. The Catholic Union wrote to all parliamentary candidates and sitting MPs in advance of the election with our own manifesto. It called on candidates to make a priority:

- Care for vulnerable people
- Religious freedom
- Family life
- Education
- Dignity of life.

This manifesto was based on the results of a survey we carried out earlier that year, which found that these were the areas of most concern to our members and supporters. This has also helped as a useful starting point for our engagement with MPs in the new Parliament.

Since the election we have attempted to find out which MPs are Catholic and we estimate there are 113. This is about 17% of the total 650 – a not inconsiderable number. There are also approximately 89 Catholic peers in the House of Lords. We have reached out to all and look forward to building constructive working relationships regardless of political affiliation.



### Scotland: political highlights 2024 – 2025

Last year, MSPs voted 118-1 (with 9 abstentions) to introduce controversial **buffer zones** around hospitals and clinics in Scotland where abortions are carried out.

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Scotland has repeatedly condemned all harassment and intimidation of people, including those attending hospitals and other medical facilities, however, the Conference also made it clear to MSPs that laws are already in place to protect people from harmful behaviour and that this new law will only serve to criminalise pro-life prayer and peaceful, prayerful gatherings in certain parts of the country.

The law also prohibits certain conduct within private homes, churches and schools situated within the designated zone. For example, having a pro-life poster in the window of one’s home which is within the zone could be considered criminal behaviour. When pressed on whether someone praying by

the window in their own home could be criminalised, Gillian Mackay MSP, the author of the buffer zone bill, chillingly responded that it “depends on who is passing the window”.

Bishop John Keenan, Bishop of Paisley and spokesperson for the Bishops’ Conference on life issues said that the passing of the buffer zone bill was a “chilling day for fundamental freedoms” and said that the “unnecessary” law would “disproportionately affect citizens of faith.”

Bishop Keenan added: “While we commend the one MSP who was prepared to recognise and call out the injustice of this draconian law which now criminalises citizen’s thoughts and makes it illegal to pray in certain parts of the country, it is concerning that there was only one.”

The Scottish Government has established a working group to consider a **review of abortion law** in Scotland. In a submission to the working group, Scotland’s bishops argued that we all have a “collective duty” to “uphold the right to life and to ensure that both mother and child are accepted and loved by a caring, compassionate society.”

The bishops lamented the prevailing anti-life culture which “declares it acceptable to destroy innocent human life in the womb” and said that it “does not belong to public authorities to recognise the right to life for some, but not for others.”

The bishops also called into question the legitimacy of the working group, which is composed substantially of pro-abortion supporters and has no pro-life members, and which has already enshrined a ‘non-regression principle’ to ensure no progress will be countenanced on pro-life matters, no matter what evidence comes forward.

In May, the **Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill** passed its first hurdle in the Scottish Parliament.

Following several hours of debate in Holyrood, the Bill, which could eventually legalise doctor-assisted suicide in Scotland, passed the first of three parliamentary stages by 70-56 votes.

Bishop John Keenan, President of the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland and Bishop of Paisley, said he was “deeply disappointed” that the Parliament had “taken the first step to permit the state to provide vulnerable people with the means to end their lives prematurely.”

He did, however, refer to the many MSPs who, during the debate, “expressed significant reservations about the Bill” and said that he hopes and prays that MSPs will “take time to reflect very carefully on these concerns and reject the Bill before it is passed into law.”

It is clear from the debate that many MSPs voted in favour of the Bill to give them more time to consider a very difficult and challenging issue, and that support for the Bill at this stage does not necessarily mean MSPs will vote for it in future.

The Bill proceeds to the next stage of parliamentary scrutiny, including consideration of amendments, before a final version is put before the Parliament for a vote. If passed at that stage, the Bill will become law.

The bishops of Scotland were also invited to **meet with First Minister**, John Swinney, at Bute House, Edinburgh in November, celebrated the annual **Mass in the Scottish Parliament** in June, and **visited London** in April to celebrate Mass and meet MPs and Peers in the UK Parliament, and to meet with the Catholic Union of Great Britain.

### Anthony Horan

Director, Catholic Parliamentary Office  
Bishops’ Conference of Scotland



## 2024 Annual General Meeting

Bishop John Sherrington, Lead Bishop for Life Issues for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and Baroness Hollins, addressed members at the well-attended AGM. Maggie Doherty, Director of the Centre for the Art of Living and Dying Well, delivered the keynote speech which explored vividly, and hopefully, how learning about dying well and promoting death literacy across our networks can help you to live better. Baroness Hollins also talked about the need for GRACE in life: Give – do something for somebody else, Receive – letting others do something for you, Active – helps your mental and physical health, Create – creativity and Engagement – Engage in relationship, trusting somebody else in your daily life.

## Expert Webinars and Panel Discussions



*AI Faith and Ethics at a Crossroads*



*Assisted Dying Panel Discussion*



*Assisted Dying Webinar*

## 2024 Craigmyle Lecture



Professor Tom Shakespeare, Professor of Disability Research, delivered the Catholic Union's 2024 Craigmyle Lecture on 19 November entitled 'Make a level path for my feet: disability equality, and love'. Professor Shakespeare referred to the barriers of access and attitudes and discrimination which in turn are a large part of why disabled people are twice as likely as people without a disability to be unemployed. He urged us to approach helping people in a different way, so that it is seen as solidarity, not as charity, and so that we can still be equals. There was a discussion about how caring solidarity had an intergenerational cyclical dimension to care where over time, we are all carers and cared for where ultimately, we are investing in our own future.

## Pub Talks



*Stephen Pound*



*Lord Glasman*



*Andrew Hawkins*

We have also continued our well-attended series of "Pub Talks" which gives those attending the chance to hear a well-known speaker talk and then ask questions in convivial surroundings. Recent speakers have included Lord Glasman, who urged members to have confidence in their faith, Andrew Hawkins, CEO of Whitestone Insight, on polling, Andy Keen-Downs CBE, Chief Executive of the Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact) spoke about prison reform and the impact on prisoners' families, and former MP Stephen Pound on politics inside Westminster and beyond. Please look out for further talks and come along.



## 2025 Summer Gathering



This year's Summer Gathering was held at Worth Abbey. Baroness Hollins spoke about the relevance of St Benedict in the struggles of today and how vital it was to hold onto hope that the tide will turn. Baroness Hollins underlined the important role of the Catholic Union to help and support Catholics in public life. She said that service was a key part of our formation in faith, and as Catholics, we should

be supporting the next generation to stand up to serve society. With regards to the Terminally Ill (Adults) End of Life Bill, Baroness Hollins emphasised how it did not offer choice, it simply provides a new way to die. Vice Chair of the Catholic Union, Dr Karen Singarayer, spoke about the St Benedict's Week Study Day which had representatives from the UK and Ireland of the Benedictine and Cistercian monastic communities, monks, nuns, members of the Lay Community of St Benedict and Oblates including Benedictine communities from the Anglican Communion.

Attendees had the wonderful opportunity to join in the 50th anniversary celebrations at Worth Abbey including Mass, a talk by the Abbot Primate and Vespers. Our great thanks to Worth for hosting us and showing exceptional Benedictine hospitality.

## Weekly Briefing

Some of our growth in membership is due to innovations in the services we offer. We now have over 5,000 subscribers to our weekly email briefing across England, Scotland and Wales, helping keep Catholics informed about news and events. We aspire to this becoming the most read Catholic bulletin in Great Britain. Each week there is a Guest Editorial by a notable Catholic, these have included Andy Keen Downs CBE, Juliet Etchingam, John Studzinski CBE, Melanie McDonagh, Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP, Professor Sonia Kumar and Martin Foley. Our popular School of the Week feature was launched this year and has so far featured over 20 schools from across Great Britain. Please do encourage fellow parishioners, family and friends to sign up.

## Prayer of the Faithful

Our weekly provision of Bidding Prayers for each Sunday, launched last Autumn, has also proved popular. Prayers are sent to nearly 2,800 parishes, schools and communities. Again, please encourage others, including your hard-pressed parish team, to sign up to for this useful service.



## Nigel Parker KSS KHS

Former Director of the Catholic Union, Nigel Parker, was invested as a Papal Knight of the Order of St Sylvester on Saturday 2 November 2024. This very special honour was conferred by the Rt Rev Philip Moger during Mass at Nigel's home parish church of St Mary

Magdalen in Wandsworth, London. Bishop Moger noted Nigel's outstanding contribution to the country's Catholic community and, in particular, his leadership of the Catholic Union over the last seven years.

## Robert Rigby KSG



Cllr Robert Rigby, Lord Mayor of Westminster and former Chairman of the Catholic Union, was invested as a Papal Knight of the Order of St Gregory the Great in March 2025. Westminster Cathedral was packed with leaders from the world of politics, charity and business and the celebrant was Bishop Nicholas Hudson, auxiliary bishop in the diocese of Westminster. Bishop Hudson said: "In recognition of Councillor Rigby's dedicated public service as a member of the City Council and the Catholic Union, and in view of his commitment to his Catholic faith, I was delighted to invest him as a Knight of the Pontifical Order of Saint Gregory the Great."

## Fundraising

The Catholic Union's success in providing a clear voice in Parliament for Catholics, across society and the media, is limited by critical resources. In order to truly succeed for Catholics in the country, the Union must be able to draw on not only our experts, who give so much on a voluntary basis, but also fund our small professional team. The Catholic Union could not play this role without the members (143 at present) of the St Thomas More Circle. The Circle is now in its seventh year and it has enabled the Catholic Union to grow steadily in its output and impact. New members have continued to join the Circle and they now include supportive charitable trusts and foundations in addition to individual donors. There have also been sponsors for our events (this is crucial) and we look forward to ever expanding the public education aspect of our work. As always, we are keen to be introduced to any prospective individual donors, charitable trusts or potential event sponsors. Thank you to all donors who support our vital work.



## CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS REPORT TO THE COUNCIL ON THE UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE CATHOLIC UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN

In accordance with our terms of engagement, we have examined the financial statements of the Catholic Union of Great Britain for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, which comprise the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet and the related notes, which have been prepared from your accounting records and from information and explanations you have given us.

As a practising member firm of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), we are subject to its ethical and other professional requirements which are detailed at [icaew.com/membershandbook](https://www.icaew.com/membershandbook).

This report is made solely to you, the Union's Council, as a body, in accordance with our terms of engagement. Our work has been undertaken solely to examine the financial statements of The Catholic Union of Great Britain and state those matters that we have agreed to state to them in this report in accordance with the guidance of ICAEW Technical Release TECH08/16AAF. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Union and its Council as a body for our work or for this report.

You have approved the financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 and have acknowledged your responsibility for them, for the appropriateness of the financial reporting framework adopted and for providing all information and explanations necessary for their compilation.

We have not verified the accuracy or completeness of the accounting records or information and explanations you have given us and we do not, therefore, express any opinion on the financial statements.

### **Sproull & Co.**

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**Date: 20/05/2025**

## THE CATHOLIC UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN

### ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024

#### **Responsibilities of the Hon. Treasurer**

The Hon. Treasurer is required to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs and of the surplus or deficit of the Union for the period. In preparing these accounts, the Hon. Treasurer is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently,
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent, and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Union will continue in existence.

The Hon. Treasurer is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which will disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Union. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Union and thus for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

### **Accounting Policies**

1. Life Subscription Fund. Income credited to the Life Subscription Fund on receipt is taken to the credit of the Income and Expenditure Account over a period of twenty five years in equal annual instalments commencing in the year in which the subscription is received.
2. Annual Subscriptions. Annual subscriptions are taken to the credit of the Income and Expenditure account at the time of receipt.
3. Investment Income. Investment income is derived from securities listed on the London Stock Exchange.
4. Tangible Fixed Assets. Depreciation on office equipment is provided at 33% on cost per annum in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024				2023			
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>								
<b>SUBSCRIPTIONS</b>								
Annual subscriptions			11922				13220	
Transfer from Life Fund			<u>1738</u>				<u>1727</u>	
				13660				14947
ST THOMAS MORE CIRCLE								
Benefactors and Supporters				13504				19087
<b>DONATION</b>								<b>35000</b>
<b>INVESTMENT INCOME</b>								
Aberdeen Std UK Income Equity Fund Income A Shares			925				987	
Allianz UK Listed Equity Income Fund C Class Income			1208				1194	
Barclays UK Equity Income Fund (Class A Income Shares)			1110				1063	
Fundsmith Sustainable Equity Fund			44				39	
Janus Henderson Global Equity Income Fund A Income			2443				2599	
JP Morgan UK Equity Income Fund B Income			<u>241</u>				<u>244</u>	
				5971				6126
DONATIONS				8000				3939
SUNDRY RECEIPTS				6979				3765
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>				<u>48114</u>				<u>82864</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>								
	<b>Income</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Net</b>		<b>Income</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Net</b>	
Events	5239	13270	8031		770	5494	4724	
Staff Costs			15612				54607	
Rent			2121				1828	
Postage and Telephone			1759				1366	
Website and IT incl database			4040				4521	
Printing			1474				2024	
Audit & Accountancy fees			1414				1500	
Travel & Conference Expenses			535				321	
Office Expenses			3044				1066	
Hire of Office Equipment			3124				5428	
Other Expenses			<u>248</u>				<u>241</u>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>				<u>41402</u>				<u>77626</u>
Surplus for the year before Revaluation of Investments				6712				5238
Unrealised profit on investments in the year				5376				4275
<b>Profit for the year</b>				<u>12088</u>				<u>9513</u>

## BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

			2024			2023		
			Cost	Reval'n	Value	Cost	Reval'n	Value
<b>INVESTMENTS</b>								
6512.06	units	Aberdeen Std UK Income Equity Fund Income A Shares	3198	20631	23829	3198	21429	24627
7352	units	Allianz UK Listed Equity Income Fund C Class Income	4974	19272	24246	4974	18750	23724
5414.80	units	Barclays UK Equity Income Fund (Class A Income Shares)	2214	20306	22520	2214	19397	21611
26832.27	units	Fundsmith Sustainable Equity Fund	55,000	6,372	61,372	35,000	3883	36384
39,175.67	units	Janus Henderson Global Equity Income Fund I Income	4446	75825	80271	4446	73851	78297
11797.77	units	JP Morgan UK Equity Income Fund B Income	1292	4680	5972	1292	4400	5692
			<u>71124</u>	<u>147086</u>	<u>218210</u>	<u>51124</u>	<u>141710</u>	<u>192834</u>
<b>OFFICE EQUIPMENT</b>								
		Cost		6897			6897	
		Less Depreciation		<u>6896</u>	1		<u>6896</u>	1
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>								
		Debtors		5300				
		Bank Current Account		26742			47569	
				<u>32042</u>			<u>47569</u>	
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>								
		Creditors		<u>1600</u>			<u>3000</u>	
				<u>1600</u>			<u>3000</u>	
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>					30442			44569
				<u>248653</u>			<u>237404</u>	
<b>LIFE SUBSCRIPTION FUND</b>								
		Balance at 1 January		16464			16691	
		Received during the year		900			1500	
				<u>17364</u>			<u>18191</u>	
		Less Transferred to subscriptions		<u>1739</u>			<u>1727</u>	
					15625			16464
<b>REVALUATION RESERVE</b>								
		Balance at 1 January		141710			137435	
		Unrealised profit on investments in the year		<u>5376</u>			<u>4275</u>	
					147086			141710
<b>ACCUMULATED FUND</b>								
		Balance at 1 January		79230			73992	
		Surplus for the year		<u>6712</u>			<u>5238</u>	
					85942			79230
				<u>248653</u>			<u>237404</u>	

Approved by the Council on 12 May 2025 and signed on its behalf

*Veronica Fulton*

Dr V Fulton FCA MA DSG  
Hon. Treasurer

## Our Membership

The Chairman and the Council wish to express their thanks to all our Members and Supporters whose commitment allows the Catholic Union to flourish.

### Welcome to our new members and supporters

(1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025)

Mrs J Abbott, Mr B Andradi, Mr M Blomley, Mr J Brooks, Mr R Burke, Mr P Cusworth, Miss M Darby, Mr S De la Bedoyere, Miss I de Minvielle Devaux, Mr M Dent, Mr P Dlugosz, Mr T Duffy, Mr S Elderfield, Canon P Ellul, Mr T Fitzgerald O'Connor, Ms Flanagan, Mr C Gehrke, Mrs K M Glenton, Mrs F Griffiths, Deacon Q Hall, Miss J A Harwood, Ms K Hill, Mr S John, Miss J M Johnson, Mr M Judish, Dr F Killick, Miss E Kirk, Mr N Kyrke-Smith, Miss F MacPherson, Ms L Maydew-Gale, Mr EWJ McNamara, Dr P Murray, The Earl of Oxford & Asquith, Mr N Perry, Mr S Pound, Rev A Reader-Moore, Mr R Scales, Mr R T Strudwick, Mrs F Szymanski, Mr S Thompson, Ms K Thornton-Norris, Mrs K Treherne, Mr S Wasmuth, Mrs A M Whitehouse, Mrs G Whitley, Mr R Beurthe, Mrs F Collings, Mr J Darley, Mrs L Darley, Mr C Englard, Mrs C Englard, Mr M Karam, Mr G Monet, Mrs L Monet, Mr A Riva, Prof E Riva, Cdr J Francis, Mr R Pirozzolo, Mr J Bailey, Ms G Chibesa, Mr C Claydon, Mr Dobell, Mr L Eleonore, Miss T Fakhoury, Mr A Fernandes, Mr A Ferreira, Mr W S Fonseka, Mr Gebruers, Mr J Kershaw, Mr K Khoo, Mr A Mensah, Miss M O'Brien, Mrs C Ojukwu, Mr J Parkes, Mr T Sylvester, Miss E Thwaites, Ms I Vicente Arreche, Mr Woods, Mr M Armour, Mr R Beurthe, Mrs F Collings, Mr P Loyd, Dr J Edmunds, Mrs J Gibbs, Mr J W B Gibbs, Mr J Goodall, Miss G Kay, Rt Hon R Kelly, His Honour Judge C McGonigal, Sister M McNamara, Mr M Mordue, Mrs JM Thayer, Mr A Wilkinson.

### We are sorry to report that 9 of our members have died

(1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025)

Dr M Hollins,  
Miss M Inglehearn,  
The Marquis of Lothian,  
Mr J F McDermott,  
Major-General B P McGuinness CB,  
Mr G J Norris, Prof R Pring,  
Mr S E Sexton,  
Dr A Whitehouse

*May they Rest in Peace. All of our members, past and present, will be remembered at Holy Mass following the AGM.*

As at 31 July	2025	2024	2023
<b>Paying Members</b>			
Annual Single	524	483	437
Annual Joint	144	128	113
Life Single	489	504	491
Life Joint	114	121	114
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,271</b>	<b>1,236</b>	<b>1,155</b>
<b>Non-Paying Members</b>			
Honorary	57	37	23
Student/Under25s	176	140	129
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,504</b>	<b>1,413</b>	<b>1,307</b>

# Catholic Union of Great Britain 2024 - 2025

## President

Professor The Baroness Hollins of Wimbledon FRCPsych, FRCPCH, FRCP hon, FCMSA, FHEA, FIPD (CB)

## Former Presidents

The Lord Alton of Liverpool KCSG KCMCO (CB)

The Lord Brennan of Bibury KC\*SG KC (LAB)

The Rt Hon Sir Edward Leigh MP for Gainsborough (CON)

## Vice Presidents

### House of Commons

Mary Glendon MP for Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend (LAB)

Mike Kane MP for Wythenshawe and Sale East (LAB)

### House of Lords

The Baroness Hooper CMG DSG FRSA FRGS of Liverpool and St James's in the City of Westminster (CON)

### Non Parliamentary

The Lord Craigmyle

Dame Rachel de Souza DBE

Michael Henderson KSG KC\*HS

The Rt Hon Ruth Kelly

Professor Anthony McClaran

Stephen Pound

## Ecclesiastical Adviser to the Council

Rt Rev Nicholas Hudson, Auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of Westminster

## Chair

Richard Collyer-Hamlin

## Vice Chair

Dr Karen Singarayer DHS

## Treasurer

Dr Veronica Fulton DSG FCA MA PhD

## Secretary

Michael Pritchett MA CdipAF

## Elected Members of the Council

Paul Barber MA (Cantab) MA (Canon Law) JCL

Dr David Campbell

John Coleby

Matthew Gibbs BA

Martin Foley

Stuart Hudson MA MSc FRSA

Prof John Lydon GCSS KHS KCMO

Dr Wojtek Rakowicz PhD (Cantab), FRCP

Andrea Speranza

Esther Theodore BA

## Joint Medical Ethics Committee

Dr Philip J Howard MA GDipLaw LLM MA MD FRCP (Chair)

## Parliamentary Affairs & Society Committee

Matthew Gibbs BA (Chair)

Patricia Stoa (Secretary)

Louisa Collyer-Hamlin (Head of External Affairs)

## Scotland Committee

Prof Bart McGettrick OBE KC\*HS (Chair)

## Executive Committee

Richard Collyer-Hamlin (Chair)

Michael Pritchett (Secretary)

## Events Committee

Dr Karen Singarayer DHS (Chair)

## Membership & Fundraising Committee

Richard Collyer-Hamlin (Chair)

Dr David Campbell (Secretary)

## Education Committee

Prof John Lydon GCSS KHS KCMO (Chair)

Dr Caroline Healy (Vice-Chair)

Prof Bart McGettrick OBE KC\*HS (Secretary)

## Catholic Union Team

Louisa Collyer-Hamlin (Head of External Affairs)

Catherine Pepinster (Consultant)

Yvonna Raftopoulos (Consultant)