

ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF ST STEPHEN

REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2012

The Annual Report always gives the Central Council the opportunity to reflect and give thanks for the past year and to help plan for the future.

The Central Council thanks all Diocesan Directors and Lay Councils for their work in promoting the Guild.

Lay Diocesan Councils, together with their Diocesan Directors play an important and pivotal role in the life of the Guild. Whilst we still seek an appointment of a Diocesan Director for Hallam we are pleased to hear that Marc Besford has been appointed Diocesan Director for Hexham and Newcastle and has been proactive in establishing Guild branches throughout his Diocese.

We were delighted that, on the feast of St. Barnabas, to attend Nottingham Cathedral for the priestly Ordination of Simon Gillespie, who for many years was the Treasurer of Nottingham's Lay Council. We extended our prayers and good wishes to him as he takes up his appointment as Assistant Priest in Mansfield.

Under Anthony Ogunseitan's guidance a small team produced the second edition of "The Altar Server". It was an enormous task and a lot of positive feedback has been received from around the country. Articles and photographs for a future edition may be posted to the Guild address or emailed to thealtarserver@ymail.com. A Facebook page has been set up in connection with the magazine. The Central Council continues to seek a person with journalistic skills to become our Publicity Officer. Please contact the Secretary or a member of the Central Council to recommend a likely candidate.

Closer relations are being forged with the Guild in Australia following a visit by Fr. Danai Penollar their National Director. He is in the process of reviving their Guild and the Central Council has offered advice in this task.

The Centenary Project to install a mosaic of St Stephen in Westminster Cathedral, at a confirmed cost of £30,000, has from donations raised £11,000. During the year the Notley Bequest was transferred to the mosaic fund along with £5,000 from our main account to bring the total to £20,000. The late John O'Brien's estate has bequeathed to the Guild £60,000 for the completion of the Mosaic. This money will be used to meet the difference once any further branch/individual donations have been received by the end of October 2012. In consultation with the Cathedral Authorities we await the finalisation of a design and an installation timetable.

The sale of Guild Goods again exceeded 333 orders with an approximate value of £22,011.59. The regular team meeting to pack goods works extremely well with orders being despatched usually within one month of receipt. Our thanks go to Miss Gillian McLauchlan, the Guild Goods Manager, and Fr. Keith Stoakes for facilitating this. We now aim to process orders during the third week of the month (except August).

Three new presentation items have come on stream. They are Guild Medals, either Bronze or Silver, encapsulated in a resin block. The Silver Medal can also come with a clock. They will retail at £25.00, £35.00, and £40.00 respectively.

The Annual Dinner was again held in February at Holy Trinity Parish Centre, Brook Green. The Guest of Honour was The Archbishop of Westminster, the Most Reverend Vincent Nichols, the Archconfraternity's Superior General. 113 members and guests enjoyed a fine meal and the opportunity to meet with the Superior General. Our thanks are extended to Michael Chute and the team at Brook Green.

The National Mass for Altar Servers took place in Westminster Cathedral in September, with Bishop John Sherrington, Auxiliary in Westminster, as Principal Celebrant. It was organised by the Events Committee, under the chairmanship of Michael Chute, it attracted approximately 800 servers, from Westminster and far beyond, together with family and friends and was deemed to be a great success. We hope in future that the Mass will be given a fixed month in the busy schedule of Cathedral events. Next year's Mass will be on Saturday 9th March 2013 at 2.30pm.

The Rome trip planned for February 2013 has unfortunately been cancelled due to the lack of numbers.

Members of Central Council are always willing to attend Diocesan and Branch events across the Country. Arundel and Brighton, Birmingham, Hexham and Newcastle, Northampton, Nottingham, Southwark and Westminster featured amongst the many Dioceses visited this past year.

The Council welcomes and congratulates the following newly affiliated parishes:

Our Lady of Lourdes	Newent	Clifton
St Benedict	Swansea	Menevia
Our Lady Star of the Sea Cathedral	Takoradi	Sakondi-Takoradi, Ghana
St Gregory & St Augustine	St Louis	St Louis MO USA

During the year the Council approved the award of the Archconfraternity's **Gold Medal** to the following for completion of 50 years of serving as enrolled members of the Guild:

Michael Mulroy	Sacred Heart, Tunstall	Birmingham
Shawn Clarke	St George & the English Martyrs, Shoeburyness	Brentwood
Michael Adamson	St Helen, Westcliff-on-Sea	Brentwood
Peter Knott	Our Lady of Lourdes, Newent	Clifton
Martin Ceresa	St Joseph, Romsey	Portsmouth
Thomas Mullan	St Edward, Windsor	Portsmouth
Michael Barnes	St Joseph, New Malden	Southwark
John Dale	St Francis de Sales, Hampton	Westminster

The **Gold Medal of Merit** was awarded to the following for completion of 50 years of serving but not necessarily all that time as members of the Guild:

Andrew Downes	St Joseph and St Cuthbert, Loftus	Middlesbrough
Peter Selwood	Our Lady of the Rosary, North Hinksey	Portsmouth

The Council extends its congratulations to them all.

The Council is greatly appreciative of the dedication shown by the many servers and priests, throughout the country who uphold the ideals of the Archconfraternity. Maintaining high standards of serving, a primary object of the Guild, can only be achieved by training and encouragement in local parishes which the Central Council wholeheartedly supports.

Nicholas Tilbury
CHAIRMAN OF THE
CENTRAL COUNCIL
24th November 2012

Events organised for 2013 so far are:

The Annual Dinner - Friday February 1st 2013 at Holy Trinity, Brook Green, London.

The National Mass for Altar Servers - Saturday 9th March 2013 at 2.30pm in Westminster Cathedral.
The Principal celebrant will be Archbishop Vincent Nichols.

Guild Year of Faith Pilgrimage to Walsingham - Saturday 7th September 2013.

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