

## From the Rector General

Working in a London cathedral means that life is never dull. When I received a telephone call from Lambeth Palace to ask confidentially whether we would be happy to host the consecration of the two new Provincial Episcopal Visitors (PEVs) who would replace those who had left the Church of England to join the Ordinariate, I knew that it was one of those decisions which wouldn't make everyone happy. But we discussed it at a Staff Meeting and came to the decision that the right thing to do was to say, yes. And that is what we did.

Reactions to the news that the service was to be at Southwark were varied. But for many there was a feeling of confusion if not consternation. Was Southwark changing its mind? Were we less committed to the ministry of women? What had happened to our prophetic edge?

I write this just a week away from the service and quite clear that we have made the right decision and delighted that the service is to be in Southwark. I said to one of those to be ordained bishop 'We have to talk in the future - we have to find a way of working as catholics together.' And he said to me 'There is more that unites us than divides us'.

The decision by some priests and members of their congregations to join the Ordinariate at Easter this year filled me with sadness.

This kind of division and the parting of ways can make nobody happy. At the same time we are a church which ordains women and which will have women bishops and there is no denying that and no going back on that. That is where the Holy Spirit has led us and as a consequence we are seeing the fruits of wonderful ministry in our church. Those who cannot stay in a church in which women exercise priestly ministry have to make the decision for themselves.

But I believe that those who chose to stay but who cannot for one reason or another, at the moment, accept ministry from a woman in priestly or episcopal orders have to be cared for. They are part of our church and as catholics, and inclusive catholics, we need to value them. Hosting the consecration of the PEVs has been Southwark's attempt to say, 'We are committed to the future and to working with you. We are committed to an inclusive church which includes even those with whom we disagree.'

The reports from around the dioceses have been encouraging to some extent as the debates on women in the episcopate continue. Much concern exists though about the nature of the provision for those with whom we disagree and the extent to which we are willing to compromise further. I am sure that this will be the make or break point

when the debate returns to Synod next July. It is going to call for imaginative generosity and firm commitment at the same time. We cannot create a two-tier episcopate – that is simply not catholic and women in episcopal orders must have equal rights, dignity and authority as their male colleagues. And at the same time we want to be as accommodating and as generous as we can be with those who hold a different view from our own.

We hope that what we see as a generous and inclusive response as Bishop Banks and Bishop Baker are ordained will help to create a sense of trust for the future and a realisation that inclusive, progressive, affirming catholics mean what we say, that our word can be trusted and that in Christ we want to move forward together in the faith which unites us.

**Fr Andrew Nunn Rector General**

## Rome 2012

Bookings have come in thick and fast for the First International SCP Conference in Rome 2012. There are places still available particularly if you are willing to share with a friend or bring your partner or spouse. Visit the website for more details.

## AGM 2012

As a result of going to Rome for the Conference in 2012 our AGM will be delayed until later in the year and will take place on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October at Southwark Cathedral. The day will focus on Catholic Evangelism and the key note speaker will be the Bishop of Chelmsford, the Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell SCP. Get the date in your diary.

## Dearmer news



On 2<sup>nd</sup> May Fr Gareth Bowen kindly hosted a Mass (with refreshments after, naturally) at St Martin's, Barnehurst in south east London during which ordinands training on SEITE were admitted to the Dearmer Society. Fr Paul Prentice, vicar of St Andrew's Orpington and chaplain to the Dearmer group at SEITE, admitted eight ordinands. These new members come from the dioceses of Chichester, Southwark, Rochester and London.

**Mtr Natasha Woodward**

## Membership

The great joy of my job is to hear from people who want to start a new chapter of the Society. Lichfield is not one of the smaller English dioceses so it is wonderful that at the end of May Fr Andrew was able to go to Stafford to inaugurate its chapter. Prior to that it was a joint chapter with Worcester so our best wishes go to the now smaller Worcester chapter. Our vice-rector, Fr Johannes Arens, has moved to Leicester Cathedral and is in the process of gathering together priests to form a new chapter in that diocese. I have had a couple of other enquiries that I hope will lead to new chapters.

The lesser joy of my job is to try, with Fr Edward

Dowding, to work how many members we have in the European province, who they are and where they live so that they get to receive this newsletter at the correct address. I sometimes pick up moves from the appointments page in the Church Times if I recognise a name, but if you are on the move a quick e-mail to me via the society website would be a great help with details of when and where – and if it's to another diocese I can then pass that on to the chapter there – or even suggest that among your early priorities might be to get a chapter going where there is currently not one.

Both Edward and I will report numbers to the annual meeting and it would be wonderful if, just for once, we could agree – or even almost agree!

**Fr John Joyce**

# News from the Company of Servers

The Company of Servers continues to grow! Since the last article, new Chapters have been established, and we're looking forward to new foundations in Chichester, Manchester, Blackburn, Liverpool, Worcester and Chelmsford. In just over 2 years of life we have nearly 300 members, which is a huge achievement and spans the country.

Festival 2011 was held at St Michael's, Headingley, and it was wonderful to have our Visitor, Bishop Stephen Conway SCP with us for the day. Bishop Stephen presided and preached at the Concelebrated Eucharist and gave Benediction at the service of Solemn Evensong that ended a day of celebration with Companions from across England. Coming as it did the day after the Royal Wedding, there was already a feeling of joy in the air, and the weather was kind, allowing an outdoor procession and a wonderful day of fellowship – thanks to the Ripon and Leeds

Chapter for hosting the event, and to all who travelled considerable distances to be with us.

We've carried on working on the handbook, and hope it will be ready for production very soon. The Festival saw the inauguration of 'Affiliate Companions' which allows for membership for those who are supportive of our aims and rule of life while not able themselves to become full or Associate Companions – more information on this will be posted on the Company website ([www.companyofservers.org](http://www.companyofservers.org)) and we look forward to welcoming all our new members and supporters.

Festival 2012 will take place in Salisbury – again, watch the website for information nearer the time, and we look forward again to welcoming companions from across the country at what is our most significant annual event.

**David Warner Chairman General**

## Report from the Provincial Council 2010/11

With the formation of the North American and Australasian Provinces of the Society meetings

have been split into two parts: first a meeting of the Provincial Council which considers matters relevant to the European Province, this is followed by a meeting of the Officers General focussing on the worldwide society.

At the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010 the main item was the Society's website. Fr Simon Rundell (Portsmouth), our webmaster, attend this meeting and was able to live a great deal of information about the way the website operated. It was agreed that the website should be redesigned and the Rector was to take this up with the graphic designer at Southwark cathedral.

Members of the Council were also to be given login information so they could each take respon-

sibility for a different area of the website. On receiving a report from the Treasurer, the Council agreed that the capitation fee should remain at £10 for 2011. The council also received reports on Catholic Evangelism, the Dearmer Society, the Company of Servers and the successful Vocations Conference held in Manchester in April.

Reports were received from both the Australasian and North American Provinces. The latter contained a response to a paper approved by the Officers General setting their view on how the Society should operate as an international body. This showed that more work needed to be done

to reach a common mind, and it was agreed that this would require a meeting of all the Provincial Councils. To this end it was agreed that, if the AGM approved, the European Province would organise an international conference to be held in Rome in May 2012 in conjunction with which a meeting of all the PCs could take place.

The meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July was mainly concerned with preliminaries to the AGM. It was agreed that a DVD of missional liturgy would be sent to each chapter and Diocesan Bishop at the Society's expense. There was also some discussion about conference attendance, prompted by the low numbers attending the forthcoming conference. The council's previous view that conferences should be self-financing was confirmed but it was also recognised that if a loss was incurred the chapter concerned might need to seek help from provincial funds. It was also agreed that the views of chapters would be sought on the reasons for members' non-attendance.

At the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> October Mtr Natasha Woodward the new Provincial Vice Rector (Formation) was welcomed along with Fr Clive Hillman (Bangor Chapter) who was in attendance in connexion with the 2011 Conference. To help with attendance at Conferences it was agreed to provide up to 10 bursaries of £75 to help with the cost to be awarded at the Provincial Rector's discretion. The Membership Secretary reported that the Society now had 590 members in 34 Chapters. A further Vocations Conference would be held in Manchester in May '11. It was agreed that ordinands should be invited to Chapter meetings. It was agreed that in view of the International Conference to be held in 2012 the Conference that year would be limited to a one day event, probably held in London. The Rector General reported that he had heard from clergy in Hong

Kong interested in joining the Society. He also reported that he was in discussion with people in Rome about the international conference.

The Provincial Treasurer presented the statement of accounts at the next meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February; this showed a surplus for the year of £318. The Provincial Rector reported in the successful meetings he had had with Chapter Rectors and the expansion of the Company of Servers. A reply had been received from the Administrator at Walsingham turning down our proposal to designate the Barn Chapel as an ecumenical chapel on the grounds that this might lead to progressive Catholics deserting the Shrine Church, it was agreed that we should not let the matter drop. It was agreed that the 2012 day conference should focus on Catholic Evangelism and also to share with AffCath the costs of producing a booklet on the case for the ordination of women to the Episcopate. An update on the Conference was received and it was noted that the post of Communications Officer remained to be filled. A brochure had been issued on the 2012 International Conference.

The next meeting of the council took place on 11<sup>th</sup> May; a request from the Provincial Treasurer to open a new bank account with NatWest was agreed. The Provincial rector would inaugurate the Lichfield chapter on 26<sup>th</sup> May and a chapter was in prospect at Leicester. The Company of Servers had held its second national festival; it had been learned that GSS had banned joint membership. The situation at Walsingham remained unchanged. Full details were given of the arrangements for the Bangor conference; 56 people had now booked for this. 67 people had booked for the international conference in 2012. Work would need to start in the autumn on a manual acceptable to all three provinces.

**Fr Michael Skinner**

## 2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This meeting will take place at Bangor on 6 July. The usual business will be discussed. There are no matters for which proxy voting is available this year. Fr Andrew Nunn and Fr Johannes Arens will both returned unopposed as Provincial Rector and provincial Vice Rector (Evangelism) respectively. The post of Communications Officer remains unfilled and the Provincial Council will endeavour to fill this by co-option. Anyone prepared to take on this responsibility should contact me as soon as possible.

**Michael Skinner**