



# the Company of Servers

## Chairman General's AGM Report, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Today is the third of these festivals and it is wonderful to welcome so many here to Croydon Minster. This day marks the end of the term of office which I and others on the Central Committee were elected for, and we shall come to the elections for those offices later in this meeting. Meanwhile, some thank yous.

Thank you to Fr Geoffrey Thompson, Zacc Lindsay and the Southwark Chapter who are hosting us today. I'm sure we'd all like to express our appreciation for today's hospitality... We are indebted to Fr Colin Boswell and all at the Minster for giving us a home this year... thanks also to Fr Mark Williams for being with us today. Particular thanks to Denise Mead for her organisational help with today and to...

For three years work and devotion to the new baby we have helped bring to toddlerhood, I am grateful to all the members of the Central Committee: Rhona McEune, John Kitchener, William Varlow, Mark Charlton and David Stephenson and Jack Harding. It has been good to get to know this group, and to see the creation over which we were trusted with stewardship grow and flourish. I thank them most sincerely for what we have been able to achieve together. I am also delighted that the time for elections has produced many new people seeking to offer themselves to play a part in the future of our Company, and I commend all taking the risk of putting themselves forward for election to you.

Special thanks, as ever to our Chaplain General, Fr Andrew. We congratulate Fr Andrew on his installation as Dean of Southwark and are grateful for his continuing support and ministry amongst us. Andrew is on the Commission which will select our new Archbishop, and we offer our prayers and our love for this process of discernment.

This has been another busy year, with Chapter foundations taking place, and new Companions continually being added to our number. Of course we rejoice in these foundations, but after 3 years there is much to be said for the progress and stability being found within Chapters and the good being done in many areas to offer consistent support and education. We are aware that one or two Chapters are encountering difficulties, but it is hoped that with the help of SCP clergy and consistent and I must say sacrificial work on behalf of many, the CoS flag continues to fly even in areas which may be challenging geographically, spiritually and in other ways. We are grateful to all our committee members across the country and especially those who work so tirelessly for the good of their fellow Companions.

Communication remains an area where we could all do better. I continue to be thankful for Mark Charlton's electronic expertise, and for the speed and efficiency with which he updates our website and Facebook page. However, I know Mark continues to struggle in receiving as much information as he would like. Please therefore keep him updated with your plans for future events and details and photographs of past events, and this will enable Mark to tell the rest of the Company and our supporters and web visitors what is happening and to see an organisation that is very much alive and growing.

In the name of communication, fellowship and the sharing of best practice, we held a meeting for Chapter Chairs before Christmas and were grateful again for the kindness of Fr Andrew and his Cathedral in hosting this. A pleasing numbers of Chairs and their representatives attended and it was good to see and talk, to share and pray together. We hope very much that this will be an event that can occur regularly and will prove to help those Chapters which need some encouragement, and enable us all to move forward together.

We continue to be stable financially, and to be managed very efficiently by John Kitchener, and have made excellent progress in paying of our loan from SCP - so stable are we in fact that we were able to purchase a new supply of insignia - this is a great achievement given that it means that nearly 500 badges are in circulation. We are very grateful to a Life with a View who continue to perform the much-valued role of being our charitable partner and their support in this turbulent financial time is very comforting. Our outstanding project, the production of handbook, sadly remains in development for a variety of reasons and because we are determined to produce a top quality product, and I hope very much that my successor will be able to bring the project to a swift conclusion and provide a useful resource.

As I hand over to the next Chairman General when they are elected shortly, I believe this Company of Servers has a bright future and one that will be vital in the continuing offering of prayer and worship at the heart of our parishes. I am hugely grateful to have had the opportunity to lead this organisation, and am pleased to leave it in good heart and with growing membership, financial stability and with plans for the future. In this Diamond Jubilee year, we have heard much that we should be grateful for in the stability and service which has been constantly offered to this nation by our Queen. As years roll by, the stability of organisations, institutions and people is marked by those which remain faithful to their ideals. The church is one such loyal institution which continues at her finest to offer prayer and praise and service as she always has. This Company of Servers has a valuable, and I hope, increasingly valued part to play in our continuing story.

For everything that has been, and for everything that lies ahead for each of you and for this Company of Servers: Thanks be to God. Alleluia.

**David Warner, Chairman General**