



Membership Report to the Annual General Meeting

Saturday 28 April 2012

The Company has continued to grow overall in terms of membership, both lay and ordained, during the last 12 months. We have increased the number of children who are servers as Companions and spread into one or two new areas of the country. Perhaps, for this year, the thing that has been most important has been the maintenance of our profile. The Company has many feet in many doors and a few more under tables of a number of diocesan areas in which Chapters are not yet founded. This is all for the good as word and, hopefully positive reputation continues to spread and enquiry emails and telephone calls continue to come in. We remain in contact and conversation, as well as some degree of preparing the ground in the areas of Blackburn, Liverpool, Chester, Chichester, Chelmsford and Manchester.

Chapters remain, and have been established in York, Ripon and Leeds, Worcester, Leicester, St Albans, Norwich, Bath and Wells, Salisbury, Exeter, London and Southwark. Both Leicester and Worcester have founded since our last AGM. Whilst all of these Chapters are established, it must be noted that they are so with some differences between them. The smallest Chapters continue to need the support of the Central Committee as well as local clergy, SCP and otherwise, to maintain their position in the life of parishes and dioceses. York and Bath especially have floundered, through no fault in particular other than being in areas of challenge both geographically and of churchmanship. They serve as reminders for us all, here today, of the absolute need for mutual support and *doing* rather than just *saying and praying*. Whilst these are essential to our corporate life we, as servers, and you as clergy, must get some hands dirty! We have, and hope to develop, a range of materials to encourage publicity and support as well as awareness. There seems to be in some quarters a suspicion that what we do is part of a secret society for only the initiated and experienced. We need to remember our commitment not only to serve but also to evangelise!

To slightly brighter notes ... Salisbury, Exeter and Ripon Chapters are flourishing! Each has membership exceeding 45 Companions and the committees and servers and clergy here must be thanked for their continued endeavours to maintain the presence of CoS in these places. Southwark, not so old, has set down roots which have spread outrageously throughout the diocese and currently, with new members admitted at our Festival Eucharist, and a handful still in the wings, have membership of Companions just shy of 100! This is a true testament to all concerned and I know a little of the incredibly faithful and committed work which continues to develop the work of the Company here.

All of this information will leave you wanting to know our total membership which I can happily report has increased by a further third since last April to now approximately 300 Companions with a further 35 Associate Companions. As ever, the work continues, a mutual duty and responsibility in our joint ministries.