

# Centenary Mass - Welcome and Homily

by Rt Rev Terence Drainey, Bishop of Middlesborough

**Homily:** (The following are extracts from the Bishop's Homily)

**M**ay I wish a very warm welcome here today to everyone; all the brothers of the Catenian Association, from wherever you have travelled. A very special welcome and thanks to Cardinal Keith O'Brien, Archbishop Conti and bishops, priests, deacons, religious, all our esteemed civic guests and to all family and friends of the Association - welcome. We are here as part of the centenary celebrations of the Association, and your presence increases the joy of these events, and we would like to thank the Dean and Chapter of York for facilitating this solemn act within these hallowed precincts.

Today we commemorate the feast of St Luke. He was a companion of St Paul in his works and travels, who supported and cared for him. A real chum, you might say, in the best sense of the word. A fitting patron as we celebrate the centenary of the "Circle of Chums" which is now dispersed throughout the world and known as the Catenian Association.

I was reading through *Catena* in preparation for today's celebration and I realised that there has been, and still is, much discussion as to what the principal purpose of the Association is. Are you purely a social institution, is your main purpose money-raising to help others, or are you a mutual-help society assisting

...He also asked the whole room to show appreciation to the brothers of York Circle of the Catenians for well over a year of assiduous work and preparation for the day's events: President Victor Nicholls, Minster Mass Committee Jim Fletcher and Martin Vevers, the Gala Dinner Committee led by Tony Coyle with Michael Cannon, Ed Sheridan and Julian Conlin. The evening's raffle for CAFOD's "Water for Life" campaign raised £2,685.

It is indeed a tribute to York Catenians that the administration of the day was unobtrusive, indeed barely visible, a true sign of superb organisation and preparation. It added up to a day to remember for the rest of our lives.

**Steve O'Neill**  
Wharfedale Circle

your own members and their families? I have no doubt that all these aims are part of what you do and what you are, but I read something in *Catena* by a brother from Birmingham which I think is especially noteworthy; he said "The Catenian Association opens a space where Faith, Hope and Charity can be incarnated in today's world."



Bishop Drainey gives his homily to a rapt congregation

I have to say I think this is a very neat and concise way of explaining what it means to be a bringer, a bearer, a herald of the Good News of Jesus Christ and a builder of his Kingdom.

We quite rightly sing the praises of the great men and women of the past, the saints and heroes of our faith; we recount the stories of our forefather's endeavour on behalf of the Church so that we might have the freedom to openly worship and profess our beliefs. We think of the great and the good, the heroic and the saintly as having gone before us; but what about our days, our generation? There are some who wail and lament that the good old days have gone, that things are not as they used to be. The Church has lost its way, let's revert to times past. Incidentally, while I truly believe it is important to call things to mind, recall the past, to remember, trying to re-live the past is never good or profitable. Remembrance is good; nostalgia (in the sense of trying to remain within a moment that has now passed) is not so good.

Whatever you are as members of the Catenian Association, you are first of all, as Christian disciples, sent to be bearers of good news to all, bringing peace and an awareness of the proximity of the Kingdom. Remember that phrase I quoted to you from the *Catena* Magazine - "the Catenian Association opens a space where Faith, Hope and Charity can be incarnated in today's world."

If this is what you are trying to do then you are certainly a herald of the Good News of Jesus Christ and a builder of his Kingdom.

You reach out in so many ways to support your bishops and priests spiritually, morally and socially. For that we are grateful. You publicly and unashamedly promote vocations to the

priesthood and the religious life. You publicly and unashamedly promote the values of Catholic Family Life. It is these values which make us realise that even in our present world, the Kingdom of God is breaking through; it is truly near to us. This is good news and we need to hear it as Christians, but we also need to share it with all who wish to listen, with all people of good will. In sharing this message we bring with it the peace that comes only from Christ himself, a peace this world does not fully comprehend. You support one another and care for each other in good times and bad. Of your plenty you share with those less well off. Again, as a result of this the Kingdom breaks through a little more clearly into our world.

So, we give thanks for all who have gone before, as we say, marked with the sign of faith. However, while remembering the past we also thank the Lord that we too, in our day, have been called and sent, albeit like lambs among wolves, to joyfully and hopefully bring that message of peace to all who will listen and to proclaim both in word and deed that the Kingdom is very near. In doing this, may we never forget to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send more labourers to his harvest! To Him be praise, glory and power for ever and ever.

**Amen**

1 Dominique – A Stranger No More, *Catena* May 2008, p.23