

## **Eulogy 1 for John Barrie KCSG**

Delivered at the Requiem Mass at St John the Baptist Church by Jackie Barrie 29/11/23

Dad was very organised. He left us pages of instructions about exactly what he wanted for this Requiem Mass. He was also a stickler for tradition, which is why he specified it to be sung – and in Latin.

Mum was amused to note he'd picked a psalm that translates as 'my chalice inebriateth me, how goodly is it'.

She told me Dad devoted his life to three Cs...

- His Children and grandchildren
- Cricket
- And Catholic life

I'll talk about the first two at the reception, and hope you can join us there later. But now, I'll focus on his Catholic life, because charity is an essential tenet of the faith, and giving back to others is regarded as an expression of God's love.

Dad was proud to be labelled an 'accomplished Catholic networker' in the press.

I occasionally asked him if he was afraid of dying. He said no. What he was afraid of was getting to Heaven and not recognising his loved ones who've gone before. I told him I was sure God had sorted that out. Perhaps He hands out name badges – like any good networker.

Frances quotes Psalm 21: "You came to greet him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on his head". With a crown of pure gold, I'm sure Dad's loved ones will recognise him.

In 1960, Dad was initiated into the Croydon Circle of the Catenian Association – a global network of Catholic men who meet regularly to enjoy each other's company and to help and support each other. He embodied the Catenian motto: "Strengthening family life through friendship and faith".

Croydon Circle president, Terence de Souza, says he'll be remembered as: "One of the giants of the Association, whose contribution has been truly immense. A man of great conviction, he lived and breathed a Catenian life. A font of wisdom to many brothers and an authoritative source of guidance on Catenian rules, customs and protocol."

Steven Rowden of Guildford Circle and Province 19 archivist called Dad: "One of the fixtures and fittings of the Association, who never seemed to begrudge a minute of his time talking with the younger inexperienced members".

He held many roles within the Catenians, and was appointed Grand President in the years 1997/8 – which took him and mum to events all over the UK and even in Australia.

For decades, Dad worked for the Society of St Augustine of Canterbury, which supports the upkeep of Archbishop House in Westminster. He started as Treasurer in 1988 and spent 10 years as Chairman until he stepped down in 2013. He was elected as the first Vice President in 2014.

Among other things, his achievements included increasing the membership, raising funds, introducing a significant female presence, and writing a history of the Society that was published in 2019.

As a result, Dad was pleased to be chosen to meet then-Prince Charles at the charity's 100-year anniversary celebration last year.

Richard Collyer-Hamelin, secretary of the Society, said: "It's hard to imagine how any layman could have done more for the church... It is right that his service was recognised in his appointment as a Knight of St Gregory the Great."

Dad received this honour in 1982 from the Holy Father because, when Pope John Paul II visited England, Dad was responsible for arranging all the lunches and transport for Bishops. And, as any chess player knows, that's particularly difficult because Bishops can only move diagonally.

In 2002, he was promoted to Knight Commander.

In addition, he sat on the Papal Knights committee from 1983 until he resigned earlier this year. During this time, he organised a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

For many years, he ran the Catholic Union of Great Britain, where he also served on various committees, began the News from Parliament that became their weekly briefing, and set up their Charitable Trust. He started that work in 2003, and was appointed Vice President in 2018.

Also in 2003 – in their 70s – he and mum walked the Camino to Santiago de Compostela, starting from Roncesvalles – a distance of 485 miles. The pilgrimage took them six-and-a-half weeks. On the first night, they slept on a mattress on the floor because so many other pilgrims had arrived before them. It wasn't always that bad. Another night, they stayed in a chateau.

Here's a brief mention of just some of his other charitable work:

- Treasurer and then Chairman of Coulsdon & Purley Homes for the Elderly. As teenagers, Rosemary and I remember going to make tea and serve salad to Browside residents in Foxley Lane

- Chair and Honorary Treasurer of North & East Surrey Life Group. For about ten years, Mum and Dad opened up their home in Foxley Lane to homeless pregnant girls. Some stayed for just one night, others stayed for months until their baby was born, then the council housed them
- Honorary treasurer of the Cardinal Hume Centre
- Accountant, auditor and president of the Canon Law Society
- Friend of Westminster Cathedral, the Holy Father, and The Venerable English College, Rome

As you can imagine from someone who headed so many organisations, Dad was very detail-conscious and concerned about accuracy. If Mum told a story he disagreed with, he'd say "no no no no no no" – because clearly one 'no' isn't enough. He's probably doing that right now, if any of the details I've mentioned are wrong.

Your presence shows the impact he had on so many people. He would remember when and where you each met, the name of your spouse, and the score of any cricket matches you watched together.

Many have shared fond memories, and your condolences and prayers have helped us through this difficult time. We're also reassured to know that multiple Masses are being said around the world for the repose of his soul.

He would have been particularly thrilled with this message from His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster:

*He was a great character and did so much for so many.*

*When I think of him, the words of St Timothy come into my mind:*

*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful".*

*May this good and faithful servant of the Lord rest in peace and rise in glory.*