

<<*This email has been sent to all GBNC & Ireland Secretaries – please forward to all your Brothers*>>

Dear Brothers,

MOTION ON “LAITY” PUT TO GBNC CONFERENCE NOW FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION AND VOTE

Background to the Vote

On 17th May 2025 members attending the Great Britain National Conference considered the “laity” motion proposing to change Rule 1 from “Membership of the Association is obtained by enrolment in a Circle or Group and is open to Catholic laymen ...” to “Membership of the Association is obtained by enrolment in a Circle or Group and is open to Catholic laity ...”.

By way of full explanation, in religious contexts, the word "laity" refers to all members of a religious community who are not part of the clergy. This typically includes all non-ordained members, even those in religious orders like nuns or lay brothers. Deacons are ordained and so warrant separate mention.

Thus, the impact of this proposed change would be that Rule 1 would become gender neutral matching the Constitution, thus allowing the Association to invite females to join the Association as the word laity is gender neutral. This was indeed the initial thrust of the motion.

At the conference the results of the vote were as follows:

Brothers Attending:	Votes “For”	Votes “Against”
- Physically	122	45
- Virtually	47	22
Total	169	67

Which meant GBNC would go to the Great Britain members to seek more votes to satisfy the minimum 200 votes in favour of a proposal before it could be put to members for consideration.

However, prior to the Conference the motion had been distributed to members registered as attending the conference and to GB Circles for other members to consider, resulting in proxy votes being held by the GBNC Secretary as follows:

	Votes “For”	Votes “Against”
Total Proxies Held	195	140

Resulting in:

	Votes “For”	Votes “Against”
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Total Votes Held	364	207
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Having satisfied the minimum 200 vote required the motion is now put to the total membership for consideration with a minimum of a 55% majority required.

VOTING

Ahead of the vote, Secretaries should encourage all their members to view the materials on the website <https://thecatenians.com/members-area/> (Username is **Members**, Password is **Prayers*0819**) which provide additional background information pertinent to any decision. For some members, Secretaries will know when it may be appropriate to provide hard copy. The importance of access to all the information “for” and “against” and the importance of all members voting cannot be overstated.

Secretaries or those conducting the vote please note that you are required to enter Total Attending (physically, electronically or via proxy), Total Votes For, Total Votes Against and Total Abstentions. Abstentions are required for audit purposes only and will not be included in the count in any way.

In accordance with Rule 26 (b) ii), Circles are now invited to conduct a vote either physically in meetings, electronically or by way of proxies the result of which is to be entered into Survey Monkey by the Circle Secretary who has received instructions separate to this email.

If the motion passes, it will lead to an extensive rewrite of all the constitutional documents so that they too will become gender neutral changing amongst other things “him” and “his” to “they” and “their” as appropriate.

Voting

Votes will be conducted at Circle meetings in accordance with Rule 26 (b) which states that the proposal will be forwarded to“... every Circle for a vote of the Members enrolled in that Circle...” and are to be held in the period from the 1st September 2025, closing 30th November 2025 after which I will inform the membership within 7 days of the votes for, against, those abstaining (but not included in the count) and thus the total number of members involved. The results require a 55% majority of those voting (excluding abstentions) to vote in favour of (“for”) the motion for it to pass.

Separate instructions, pertinent to Circle Secretaries only will be sent to them under separate cover. This will include instructions for those members unable to attend Circle meetings.

Fraternal Regards,

K G Campbell, Association Secretary

2025 Australia National Conference Sydney, 16-19 October 2025

GOA Week 2025, 5th-12th November 2025

Malta Week 2025, 15th – 21st November 2025

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