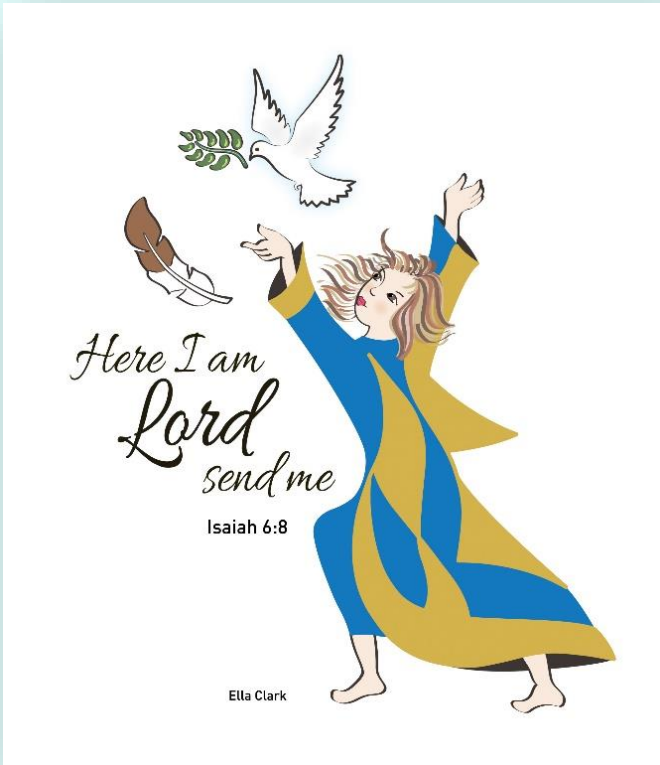




March 2024 NEWSLETTER



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President's Message

Joyce Cotter
Diocesan President

president@cwlhamilton.ca

Dear Sisters of the League,

Have you ever heard of the quote by Elbert Hubbard, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade?” Well Jesus says in John 16:33, **“Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”**

In this Bible passage, we have the reassurance that, if we seek, and find God in the struggles that we encounter, He will bring us through these experiences, drawing us closer to Himself, and His plan for us. Our focus becomes the life of Christ, and our best life in Him. Turning lemons into lemonade!

I have been praying for women to step forward in leadership roles in the League since my Presidency began in 2021. Not only do I believe in the power of prayer, but I believe God will choose that special person when the time is right. My prayers are being answered.

The Diocesan Executive welcomes a new member to the team. Esther Shaye from St. Dominic Council, Oakville, has been appointed as the new Communications Chair for the next four months. I am so delighted that, when searching the Hamilton Diocesan CWL website under “Our Leadership”, she found a vacant spot under the Communications position and reached out to volunteer her services. Thank the Lord!

Many councils in the last few months have sent messages asking, “What to do if there are no nominations for the position of President, Vice President...?” I offer words of encouragement and direction, but I say a little prayer as well. The wonderful news is that members are listening to God’s call to serve in leadership roles. May those chosen to lead and those who offered themselves so generously, be filled with gratitude and praise for sharing their God-given gifts.

This year, we will be holding elections for the 2024 – 2026 Diocesan Executive.

Each council will be asked to vote on the nominations list for the election. The Council President or her representative must be present at the convention in order for their instructed vote to count. Please put the effort forward to attend the convention on May 25 & 26, 2024 at DoubleTree by Hilton, Kitchener, and support those members who have volunteered to serve on the Diocesan Executive.

At the Pre-Convention Meeting for the Diocesan Executive, we will be voting on the list of nominations for the Ontario Provincial Council. A list of nominees will be sent to the parish councils soon for their consideration, and a vote will be taken at the Pre-Convention meeting on May 25, 2024. There are so many amazing women who have let their name stand for nominations to the Ontario Provincial Council, that you will not go wrong in whomever you chose.

Our National President, Shari Guinta, is a wonderful role model for leadership in the Hamilton Diocesan Council. She is a leader who is inspiring, compassionate, a woman of action, and of deep faith, and devotion. We thank her for her dedication and countless hours of hard work and service to the League.

As Sisters, we foster a sense of belonging to a community of women, who inspire each other to lead spirit-filled lives, as we joyfully affirm that God's presence blesses every aspect of our ordinary life. As we journey through this season of Lent and Easter, I came across a prayer written by Thomas Merton that I wanted to share with you.

“Let me see your face in every face I meet. Let me learn the intimate connection between love of you and compassion for all you have given me to be at one within their struggles and real suffering. Let me damp down my need to take and let my heart fill with the necessity to give, if I am to be your disciple.”

Lent and Easter Wisdom from Thomas Merton: daily scripture and prayers together with Thomas Merton's own words/compiled by Jonathan Montaldo. – 1st Ed.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel guide us always, as together we work “For God and Canada.”

God Bless,
Joyce Cotter, President
Joyce



Diocesan Spiritual Advisor

Fr. Ranjan D'Sa O.C.D.

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Reflection

Deacon Dana McCarthy, a retired naval officer who works in the Diocese of Orlando, in one of his blogs, narrates the conversation he had with his Jewish friend. Both were lamenting the increase in secularist ideology and the growing rejection of Judeo-Christian values in the world. Feeling sad, the way people embrace the 'culture of death' ideologies, deacon asked a rhetorical question to his friend, "How can so many people turn their back on life?"

Without showing many emotions, his Jewish friend responded: "Because for them, this is all there is. For them there is nothing more. For them life is an accident without purpose, and so they have no interest in anything but their own selfish needs. Sad, isn't it?"

Lent is a time to take a break from the routines of life and reflect on the meaning and purpose of life. True purpose of life can only come when we believe in God. In Ephesians Saint Paul tells us that without hope we live in darkness. Only through Christ we come to know God who is our life and purpose (Eph 2:12).

Scripture readings in Lent invite all of us to pay attention to God's 'Ten Commandments'. Just prior to giving the Decalogue to the People of Israel, God reminds them that He is Yahweh"-their God, who brought them out of Israel. In a way God is reminding them the terms of the covenant He made with Abraham - 'He is their God, and they are His people'. Therefore, the 'Ten commandments' are not restrictive, but rather a means to enter into a personal relationship with their God.

Fernando Armelini, a prolific preacher, and commentator on scripture, says that the 'Ten Commandments' are not difficult, severe, absurd or incomprehensible laws imposed on people to test their faithfulness. "They can be compared rather to road signs that are not placed there to limit our freedom, but to teach and

show us the right way". The signs are there to help us have a safe but joyful ride. Decalogue is meant to create an atmosphere conducive to our personal growth. It is to make us live our lives to the fullest. (Jn 10:10)

Later in the scripture Jesus gives a beautiful example of how to apply the decalogue in our lives. Jesus really lived the spirit of the decalogue. His love of God, His father and loving sacrifice of His life on the cross for the sake of His neighbour (all of us), is in a sense a perfect way of living the Decalogue.



President-Elect and Organization Chair

Teresa DiFalco
President-Elect/Organization Chair

presidentelect@cwlhamilton.ca



INTEGRITY IS
choosing
COURAGE OVER COMFORT;
CHOOSING WHAT IS RIGHT
over what is
FUN, FAST, OR EASY;
AND CHOOSING TO
PRACTICE OUR VALUES
rather than simply
PROFESSING THEM.

A WISE
WOMAN PUTS
God first.

**"A wise woman
wishes to be
no one's enemy;
a wise woman
refuses to be
anyone's victim."**

-Maya Angelou, 1928-2014

Dear League Sisters,

My focus on leadership development remains through the lens of a Catholic Women Transformational Servant Leader. In this communique I will cover: the inner strengths of Mary as servant leader model, leadership self-care, gratitude is the attitude of great leaders, the importance of love and connectiveness, the power of hope and prayer, information on the month of March, and important League information.

MEANING OF MARCH:

The month of March traditionally symbolizes new life (growth) and reigniting connectiveness with each other, our ancestors, Mother Earth, and most importantly, with Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The month of March falls during the liturgical season of Lent, which is represented by the liturgical colour purple. The colour purple during Lent is a symbol of penance, mortification and the sorrow of a contrite heart. During Lent, we grow and are renewed through confession and forgiveness, as we prepare for the celebration of Easter and the resurrection of Christ. This is in a sense a cleansing of the old and being new again. The full meaning of March is: **“to move along with a steady regular stride, especially in step with others.”** This can only be achieved through love, because love allows people to truly understand and support each other, and to build a strong bond that will last a lifetime. Pope Francis reminds us of the importance of living in community and having a loving connectiveness with each other. God calls us to this type of union with one another. In John 4:7, *“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.”* In John 13:34, Jesus said, *“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.”*

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

OUR BLESSED MOTHER AS WOMAN SERVANT LEADER MODEL:

Mary demonstrated three inner strengths as a model servant leader. 1) Mary had great strength in trusting God to surrender and just BE. In her ability to BE still in the presence of God, she understood in her heart her vocation, and who she was. Mary knew to look to God for her affirmation. 2) Mary had strength to DO what God asked of her, no matter how difficult or scary. 3) Mary had strength in her faith and God’s plan, and was willing to GO, wherever God’s plan directed her. Our new National theme for 2024 & 2025 “Here I am Lord, send me”, ties in perfectly with our Blessed Mother’s response to God’s request of Her to BE, DO, and GO.

GOOD LEADERS NEED GOOD SELF-CARE:

March is usually a gloomy time of the year for many. It certainly was for me, especially when I was diagnosed with breast cancer in March two years ago. I surrendered myself into our Lord’s care, and through my deep faith and love for

God, I found hope. God's plan revealed itself, as it was my diagnoses that saved my daughter Amanda's life! My suffering was purified and transitioned into eternal blessings from God. It is in God's Grace that I now celebrate the month of March with great gratitude for all the blessings in my life, especially the gift of my daughter's life. This month, I celebrate year two as a Breast Cancer Warrior battling a life-threatening disease that attacks **1 in every 8 women!** I encourage all my League sisters to be vigilant in getting breast screening done, as it can save lives. I can't think of any better way to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8th, than to celebrate YOU! Please sisters, book your mammograms. Women 50 and over in Ontario can do self-referrals. I am pleased to share, that through advocacy for women's health, especially breast cancer attacking 1 in every 8 women, the Ontario government is lowering the eligibility age for self-referral mammograms through the Ontario Breast Screening Program from 50 to 40 beginning this fall (2024). **"Pink Together, Stronger Forever"**

GRATITUDE is the ATTITUDE of EVERY GOOD LEADER:

Prayer is a form of gratitude, and gratitude is a form of prayer, and also being a self-care healing agent. Gratitude is a gift to the soul. Think about it. God gets nothing from our thanks, we do. Self-care and healing is found in the form of humility, gratitude and grace.

*One of my favorite woman leaders, Maya Angelou, an American memoirist, poet, and civil rights activist said, "I know that when I **pray**, something wonderful happens, not just to the person or persons for whom I'm praying, but also something wonderful happens to me. I'm grateful that I'm heard."*

Having a consistent prayer life will move our faith into a true relationship with Christ. Prayer energizes our heart and gives us hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. It also releases the power of God's blessings in our lives in all circumstances. The power of prayer is not about what we are able to do, but rather, it is about the power of the Spirit who dwells with in us. Connecting to that power and the truth of what Jesus did on the Cross is the action which empowers our prayers. A consistent prayer life allows us to join our faith with the Holy Spirit and will armor us to fight the enemy. That is the power of prayer! *"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

The best days start with GRATITUDE! Anyone can develop a greater sense of gratitude. Gratitude is an ability that can be cultivated with practice. Instead of complaining about circumstances, it is better to focus on the good things you have in life. Surround yourself with positive, good, and trustworthy people. The simplest way to improve your appreciation and quality of life is to take a few moments to reflect on the good. The benefits are numerous! The benefits of GRATITUDE are:

- ▶ Increases positive emotions and fills you with the Joy and Light that God wants for you
- ▶ Multiplies the good
- ▶ Enhances empathy
- ▶ Expands generosity and compassion
- ▶ Promotes optimism
- ▶ Increases joy and happiness
- ▶ Helps to get a perspective on life
- ▶ Lifts your spirits and self-worth

Did you know that according to research and experts, gratitude reduces toxic emotions, ranging from envy and resentment to frustration and regret? In fact, grateful people experience fewer aches and pains, and they report feeling healthier than other people? Gratitude has a positive effect on our relationships, and our overall happiness is increased. If you are looking for ways to practice and grow your own gratitude journey, I encourage you to write one sentence a day about who or what you are grateful. Then, spend a few minutes to reflect on those blessings, and give thanks to God. Breathe in the fulfilment of happiness that it offers you. You deserve it, and God wants you to live a life full of gratitude, joy, love, and contentment in your heart.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS:

I continue to offer training and workshops on: leadership development, Catholic women leadership, recruitment of members, membership management, League resource materials, annual reports, governance, parliamentary procedure, best business practices, and operations of the League. I also customize specific presentations upon request. Interested members may contact me directly at presidentelect@cwllhamilton.ca

LEAGUE AND ORGANIZATION INFORMATION:

FRANCES LOVERING AWARD

Each spring, parish councils are asked to consider nominating **one** member of their council for the Frances Lovering Woman of the Year Award. The nominations deadline is **April 13, 2024**. A selection team of five diocesan officers will read all submissions and will identify their top three selections. The nominee with the most votes will receive the Frances Lovering Woman of the Year Award at the Diocesan AMM/Convention Banquet. Nomination Forms are traditionally given out at the Spring Regional Meetings, however, I have sent them out early via email through the Regional Chairs, so that parish councils will have more time to consider a nomination, and complete and return the paperwork back to me by or before the April 13, 2024 deadline.

ANNUAL REPORT BOOK:

It is now time for parish council presidents and the diocesan team to prepare reports for the 2023 Diocesan Annual Report Book. The intent of an annual report book is to provide public disclosure of the councils operating, financial, and key activities and accomplishments over the past year. Generally, annual reports are intended to offer a transparent view of an organization's activities over the course of a financial year. These reports are to highlight your activities and accomplishments as parish councils and/or as diocesan officers since May 2023.

The deadline to submit me your annual report is on or before April 19, 2024. I will be sharing more information on this process, along with templates and instructions via email through our Regional Chairs.

INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATES:

I received the National 2023 per capita report from the Diocesan Treasurer, which identifies for me which Parish Councils had an increase in membership from 2022. I am preparing certificates, and I look forward to awarding these achievements at our Spring Regional Meetings this month (March 2024) to those parish councils who have increased their membership from 2022 to 2023.

NATIONAL ANNUAL REPORTS:

One of my goals, as President-Elect and Organization Chair, was to increase the number of parish councils participating in the National Annual Reporting exercise, and we did just that! An additional 12 parish councils participated, bringing our participation count to 37 parish councils who participated in National's Annual

Reporting exercise in December 2023. I wish to thank the participating councils, and I encourage all parish councils to participate in this important exercise next year, with a goal of having 100% of our parish councils participating.

The exercise moves from parish level, to diocesan, to provincial, to National. I was responsible for coordinating this exercise for the Hamilton Diocesan Council. I am pleased to report, that despite receiving the materials late and some other glitches, I was able to coordinate an approach for our diocesan team to read and analyze the parish council reports relevant to their portfolios and return them back to me within a short turnaround time. This allowed me to prepare and submit our diocesan submission of reports to my provincial counterpart on time.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS:

Many parish councils have held nominations and elections at their general meeting of members this year. Several parish councils used this League process for the first time in their councils. I was pleased to receive wonderful feedback from the many parish councils who benefited from using the parish council nomination and elections packages that I put together for parish councils and/or provided training. I congratulate all councils who have managed their way through this process, and the many members who have stepped forward to serve in leadership roles. This is music to my ears!

DON'T FORGET TO SEND ME PARISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE CHANGE INFORMATION:

Please ensure that you promptly send me updated information when there is a change to your executive councils. This will help me keep our diocesan parish council presidents listing up to date so that diocesan information is shared with councils efficiently. When sharing your council updates, please include the name/address and contact information (email and phone numbers) for the Parish Council President, Parish Council Secretary, and the Parish Council Spiritual Advisor. This information can be sent to me by email at presidentelect@cwllhamilton.ca

MEMBERSHIP / RECRUITMENT / MAINTENANCE:

I encourage parish councils to make membership recruitment and maintenance an ongoing activity. Promoting the League and encouraging new women to join, can be done through regular membership drives, pulpit presentations, parish bulletin

announcements, and social media, including reaching out to our youth 16 and older. Consider hosting events such as women's retreats, or other events that welcome all women from the parish and outside the parish to attend.

LEAGUE MEETINGS AND ANNUAL MEETINGS OF MEMBERS (CONVENTIONS):

I am often asked if any member can attend a League meeting or an Annual Meeting of Members. The answer is, YES! I refer you to Part XV Section 4: of the Leagues Constitution and Bylaws. It states "Any member may attend annual meetings or conventions at any level and may speak at business sessions at the discretion of the chairperson."

MENTOR SKILLS BANK

The National Mentor Skills Bank, is an excellent resource for councils looking to draw on the expertise of members on an array of topics.

PROTECTING MEMBERS'S INFORMATION:

When women join the League, they are asked to provide personal information, such as their name, home address, phone number(s), email address, etc.... The collection and retention of this information is to be protected and safeguarded by the Vice-President/Organization Chair (formally known as the President-Elect/Organization Chair). It is important to be familiar with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, also known as FIPPA. The Act protects the privacy of personal information while providing individuals with a right of access to their own information. It is thus critical that member's information is kept safe and secure. The following are some ways for parish councils to help ensure the protection of their member's private information:

- ✓ Keep information in a locked cabinet with controlled and limited access to the key.
- ✓ Password protect your electronic documents.
- ✓ Practice good records management and retention procedures.
- ✓ Only share information when it is required to carry out League business, and only to those who are required to receive it.
- ✓ Ensure that all documents containing members' information is clearly watermarked as Private and Confidential.
- ✓ When there is a change in executive, all membership records, both hard copy and electronic, shall be handed off to the new Vice-President/Organization Chair, or the President if the council does not have a Vice-President/Organization Chair. This means, when you complete your term on the executive, it is your responsibility to hand-off these records to your successor. You are not authorized to keep member's private

information either in hardcopy or electronically. The same rules would apply if a member transfers to another council. Her private information shall transfer with her.

- ✓ Never under any circumstances shall we use members' information for personal reasons.
- ✓ Never under any circumstances are we to share a member's private information without their knowledge and consent.
- ✓ A member has the right to access her private information which the League has collected on her.

CWL INSURANCE COVERAGE:

I received a few enquiries about our CWL insurance again this year with respect to coverage. It is important for members to know that they are covered under the CWL Insurance policy when attending CWL meetings, no matter where the meetings are held.

****NOTE: CWL events that councils hold that include liquor is not covered under this policy. Councils will need to purchase Special Event Insurance at their own expense.***

Councils may apply for special "top up" insurance. For example, if a council wanted to sell tickets in a mall, and the mall required more insurance than the maximum insurance coverage in our policy. A council can request a one-time top-up and pay for additional insurance coverage for a specific activity.

This is done directly between the council and the Insurance Broker.

Please ensure that your council has a copy of the 2024 Insurance Certificate. If you do not have a copy of the 2024 Certificate of Insurance, or if you have any questions, please contact me at presidentelect@cwllhamilton.ca

IN CLOSING

May you live each day with an attitude for gratitude and grace. Celebrate YOU, by scheduling time for self-care and prayer. Empower and lift others through respect, encouragement, and love. Embrace your call to serve, and share your God-given gifts with purpose through Faith, Service, and Social Justice.

Working together through challenges make us more resilient and grows us closer together. This is what women of faith and hope do.

League sisters, may you always know your value and that you are strong beautiful Christian women.

May you always sparkle God's way, and be beacons of hope and light to all you meet. *"May the warmth of complexity shine on your face. May the winds of good change blow gently at your back. May your feet find the roads of authenticity. May the web of change begin!"*

It is a pleasure to serve you as your Hamilton Diocesan President-Elect and Chair of Organization, and I look forward to continuing to share and support you in your role(s) as members and executives. If I can be of any assistance to you, or if you have any questions about the League, League development, leadership training, governance, membership, etc..., I invite any member to reach out to me at presidentelect@cwlhamilton.ca

May Mary, the mother who gave the Christ to be crucified, embrace, guide and protect you.

Lenten and Easter Blessings and Hugs,

Teresa DiFalco, Hamilton Diocesan President-Elect and Organization Chair
Teresa





First Vice President/Spiritual Chair

Laura Grint
First Vice President

firstvp@cwllhamilton.ca

Dear Sisters,

Happy Daylight Savings time, Happy St. Patrick's Day or Happy Spring whatever you are celebrating I wish you well. We have had a funny and crazy winter and in January I heard my first Robin, leading to the Blue Jay singing in the park yesterday, we live in hope of their nests and babies to come.

As we have journey through Lent, we are given time to reflect, repair and rebuild. In the first week of Lent, we heard God speak to Noah and his sons about how He would establish his covenant with them and every living thing. This shall be your sign; a bow set in the clouds will be my covenant with you and all living things on the earth and in the water. In the Gospel, Jesus was tempted for 40 days. Satan pulled out all the stops. Imagine having Angels all around you and your choice was to not let them help you. We call on them daily just to get through everyday life not just Lent.

In the second week we see how God tested Abraham. Imagine having to trust your God so wholly that you would build an altar, have your son help with it because that was required for this sacrifice, but also for others as you had learned through your faith but not be a party to what was actually going to be sacrificed. Also imagining you loved your father enough to let him tie you down and prepare for the ritual. How strong were both these men? In the second reading we see how much God loved his only son by offering him up for us and our transgressions. In the Gospel we see Jesus and three of his disciples go off on their own apart from the others and Moses and Elijah appeared to them. He became dazzling white, and the disciples knowing they were in the presence of such Holy men thought they should build a shelter a place of respect for them. Then after conferring with Jesus, they were suddenly gone!

They could not tell anyone...

In the third week (we are halfway through), we hear God speaking to Moses and giving a list of ways to live our lives, and how He will deal with those who choose to go against such laws and how generous He will be to those who carry out the laws of living. In the second reading we see that although there are still people who don't believe in the power of the cross, we do. We understand the saving power in the knowledge of God's wisdom and strength. In the Gospel we see Jesus clear the temple as it was being used as a marketplace. Explaining to those following him and those listening that the temple would be destroyed and rebuilt in three days, these men did not understand the meaning behind His words as they thought only in terms of their modern-day living. Jesus knows what lies in each one of us for He took human form. He understands the tests and tribulations we all face in one way or another.

Through the next few weeks ask yourself have I prayed to my Father in secret as he has asked and for things that will increase His kingdom and His will not ours? Have I fasted from things that are hard for me, or that will not help my fellowman? Have I given today in ways that help someone feel less lonely, or they need prayers, given of my time even if it squeezes time out of my schedule without resentment, or given to charities that I wouldn't normally or to the homeless person on the corner without judgement? All of these things are part of our Lenten journey.

I wish you a prayerful and reflective Lenten season, and a solemn and quiet Holy week.

May our Lady continue to bless each of you through this special season and may you experience her love for her son in ways that you never have before.

Peace & Love,

First Vice President/Spiritual Development Chair

Laura



A Lenten Prayer

In the passing of the seasons, phases of the moon, rising and setting of the sun, and the stars glowing in the universe, may my love deepen and expand.

In the twisting, turning, and tumbling of everyday comings and goings, in the joys and sorrows that visit me, may my love deepen and expand.

In the voices of people who have become central in my heart, who tame the rough edges of my hidden self, may my love deepen and expand.

In the faces of strangers and passersby, in each human whose spirit joins invisibly with my own, may my love deepen and expand.

In the lonely, distraught, and disdained persons longing to be respected and treated compassionately, may my love deepen and expand.

In the unity that resides among everything that exists upon and within this beloved planet we call "our Earth," may my love deepen and expand.

In the moments when the truth of my inherent goodness reveals itself and sends me forth to be kind to others, may my love deepen and expand.

In the silent prayer of my heart when I pause to be in deliberate relationship with you—the Holy One who guides my life, may my love deepen and expand.

In graced situations when the truth of my unfinishedness and the lack of being all I could be comes to greet me, may my love deepen and expand.

In the motivation found inside the journey of Jesus, his compassionate life, and the generous way he responded to others, may my love deepen and expand.


In the heartbeat of hope coming from stories of the Risen Christ,

*a steady Light-filled presence living on within me,
may my love deepen and expand.*

*In this moment, this day, this place, this time, this body that is mine,
when I repeatedly open my mind and heart to you,
may my love deepen and expand.*

*Guide of my life, may I be as present to you as you are to me. In giving myself
to the process of
spiritual growth, I trust you will show the way to live as my truest self. In all I
am and all I do,
my heart rests in your abiding love.*

© Joyce Rupp



CREATION


*Oh, what splendor the eye beholds, when on earth the truth unfolds
Every seed-bearing tree we see, planted there for you and me.
Out of darkness came the light, sent for us with all His might
Sun and moon set in the sky, high above to warm and dry.
Flowers, grass, moss, and sand, out of nothing from His hand.
Cattle and whale and spider too, big and small to name a few
Given to us from above, to feed and warm and subdue.*

*The "Tree of Life" standing tall & proud, the only restriction, "not allowed"
From all the gifts and needs bestowed, we had it all why did we forgo?
With a broken heart He sent them out, the garden that was now without.
Toil the land and make your way, such a shame we had to stray.
But He knew it wouldn't last, He loved us too much to remember our past.
He sent His only Begotten Son, to rekindle the bond and make us one.
Not in might or splendor He came, but as a babe, tiny and lame.
His Omnipotence traded for a stable manger, a willing gesture to save us
from danger.*

*For 33 years he lived with us; working, teaching, loving much.
But mankind wouldn't accept his ways, they schemed and plotted
and ended his days.*

*Scorned and beaten hanging on a tree, "No one took my life, I gave it for free."
Risen again on Easter Morn, the One True God, now Adorn.
Leaving for us His Sacred Bread, the only way we can be fed.*

No greater love "Jesus" did utter, but to lay down one's life, for another!



Chris O'Neill



Second Vice President/Christian Family Life

Joanne Palmer
Christian Family Life Chair

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Good day, ladies. It is nice to be here with our sisters of the league. I would like to bring up a few dates that are under Christian Family Life. On July 23, 2023, we celebrated Third World Day for Grandparents and the elderly were celebrated throughout the universal church. The theme chosen by the Holy Father for the occasion was “In old age, they will bear fruit” (Psalm 92:15). This intends to emphasize how grandparents and the elderly are a value and a gift both for society and for our communities. We should always pray and give thanks for our grandparents and elderly for their gifts, and prayers they have given us.



From July 28th to August 7, 2023, World Youth Day took place in Portugal. The Hamilton Diocese sent 39 young people and 4 Diocesan priests. I was able to get some comments and feelings on their experiences by attending World Youth. The following are just a few of their comments and experiences; “I chose to take a few minutes to sit outside the Sanctuary in Fatima in my journey with my thoughts and experience this. I expected it to be a moment of quiet reflection and meditation, but was surprised to find an enormous crowd of youth exiting the Church in chants and song.

Another young adult wrote, “It has always been my dream to attend World Youth Day. It deepened my connection to our Blessed Mother. Every moment that we had; it was a reminder that God is real. One of my favourite moments happened during the final night when 1.5 m pilgrims gathered together with Pope Francis. Just imagine how chaotic it could be after putting 1.5 m youth and young adults together. When the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, then 1.5 m people went into silence to adore Christ in the Eucharist. People are saying that there are no young people in the Church. Well, here they are, enjoying and adoring the Lord’s presence in silence.” Let us continue to pray for our youth and young people.

Thank-you, *Joanne Palmer*



Diocesan Secretary

Kim Ansty
Secretary

secretarycwlhamilton@gmail.com

From my experience visiting with Parish councils last year, it came to my attention that a lot of us, including me, are not really using the National, Provincial and Diocesan websites to the best of our advantage.

I will start with the National Website www.cwl.ca. Aside from a spot to order crests, stationery, council supplies and pins, there is a wealth of information contained within this website. As I click on the “Inspire” tab I ask myself, “Why am I member of the CWL”? There are a number of quick videos to help us to remember who we are, (A National Sisterhood), how our faith is affected by our membership (A Deeper Faith), what do we do as a group (Social Justice), to name a few. These are also great resources to share with potential new members to give them a quick snippet of what we are about.

The National website also contains information on new releases, annual reports, parish council memos, videos and events calendar. If you are unsure of what is up next just click on the “Inform” tab and you will be enlightened.

The CWL is more than just serving tea and crumpets! You will find position papers, resolutions and letters that you can participate in or educate yourself on from abortion to stem cell research and waste and water management. Are you looking for workshops for your members? Search no further as there are pages of power points and pdf documents to peruse.

Getting the core of the league, the Catholic Women’s League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service. Our mission, our guiding principles and the history of the league can all be found in this one website.

As we move to the Provincial Website, www.cwl.on.ca, you may be surprised that there is a virtual prayer room you can attend for those times that you need to draw extra strength or just increase your spiritual awareness.

We have been a source for change in our government. Take a look at the resolutions tab and see what we have social issues we have advanced with the government since 1996 to 2024. As we are all aware, there is a call for Truth and Reconciliation with the Indigenous Peoples. You find many links, spiritual resources and videos providing more information on this very important endeavour.

Policy and procedure can often be difficult to understand. Should you require any resources on policies, guidelines and manuals for your parish, you will find a tab on the website which focuses directly on these items. Any newsletters that have been issued can also be found on the website. Often we wait for the communiques or newsletters to come to us from our presidents. You can get these documents directly from the website as well.

Last, but not least, the Hamilton Diocesan website, www.cwlhamilton.ca, is the hub for our diocese. You will find countless resources, the famous Spectrum, which is issued quarterly, handbooks and manuals. This is a spot to get to know your Diocesan Executive. There is a lovely photo of each of these ladies and short biography. It is nice to put a face to a name, if you have not met these women yet.

This website is where you can register for the annual meeting and also provides event information for the upcoming year. It brings us full circle and has links back to the National and Provincial websites.

Please be sure to check out these websites and share them with your members.

Kim





Diocesan Treasurer

Mary Clark
Treasurer

treasurercwlhamilton@gmail.com

Welcome to the month of March!

I wish to welcome any new Treasurers as many councils have now completed their elections and installation of new executive.

Since September 2022 in the Diocesan bi-monthly Spectrum Newsletter, I submitted topics of interest, suggestions and reminders for Treasurers. If you wish a copy, please contact me and I will gladly email them to you.

In my May 2023 Spectrum Newsletter, I outlined where the \$6.00 of your membership we receive from National is spent on the Diocesan level. At the Diocesan Executive Meeting held January 20, 2024, I proposed changes to the distribution of these funds and put forth the following motions which were adopted and passed.

1. I move to amend Motion 2021.08.12.02 to increase the Convention Income per capita from \$1.00 to \$2.00 effective January 1, 2024. Seconded by Rosanne Sogan.
2. I move to amend Motion 2006.03.20.03 to increase the Bishop’s Charities from \$.30 to \$.50 effective January 1, 2024. Seconded by Joanne Gregson.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE \$6.00 WE RECEIVE FROM NATIONAL?

Split three ways

2023

Effective January 1, 2024

Bishop’s Charities -----	\$0.30	\$0.50
Convention -----	\$1.00	\$2.00
Operating Expenses as detailed below -----	\$4.70	\$3.50

Thank You & and Reminders

- Thank you to all who have sent your Parish Annual Treasurers Summary Report for donations made in 2023. I will be summarizing your figures and pass them onto the Provincial Treasurer for her reporting. To date the

amounts reported are awesome! If you or the previous Treasurer have not done so, I am still accepting reports. Please use the report form sent by your Regional Chair or contact me. A summary of your donations will be placed into the Annual Report Book

- Reminder to submit the Annual Administration Fee – This fee covers the cost of materials distributed at the Spring and Fall Regional Days, mailings, Annual Report Book and your council’s registration fee for the Diocesan Convention. Thank you to those who have already done so. Check with your President for this invoice which was sent out by your Regional Chair or contact me. **NOTE: THIS FEE MUST BE PAID BEFORE YOU CAN REGISTER FOR CONVENTION.**
- If not done submit your parish membership fees to National as the deadline was February 28, 2024. If more memberships are received during the year submit them as you receive them.
- Submit your donations for Pornography Hurts, Our Lady of Good Counsel Seminary Fund at any time during the year to your Diocesan Treasurer.
- All cheques are to be made payable to “Catholic Women’s League of Canada Hamilton Diocesan Council” and note on memo line what cheque is for.

Direct your questions or concerns to either myself or your Regional Chair.

Mary





Historian

Rosanne Sogan
Historian

Chocolate3martinis@hotmail.com

Dear Sisters in the League,

This March, is a very special one indeed!

Happy St. Patrick's Day to all our Irish sisters and to all of us who wished we were. I am sure you are familiar with the beautiful Irish/Gaelic blessing:

*May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again, 🍀☐*

But, more importantly it is the season of Lent and the most significant time of the year for Roman Catholics: Easter. I wish each and every one of you a blessed and holy Lent and rejoice in the blessing of Easter.

In this newsletter segment, I would like to continue with the different responsibilities of being the archivist and historian in your parish.

Keeping accurate records is rudimentary for developing your council's history.

Updating Archives

As historian, during your two-year term, your parish archives should be reviewed to see if all paperwork has been filed accordingly. A list should be kept with the past presidents' files, the ones from the current president and, another one, also should be placed with the minutes.

Filing Information

Thumb drives or discs should be used to store your information but, a hard copy on acid-free paper or in plastic sleeves should also be included.

Any pictures should be stored in albums with the names and dates of the people and events lists. As I said in the last newsletter, we may think we will remember everyone's names, places, events and dates, but how about those in the future? They, most likely, will not know what actually was occurring at that time. The information again should be inscribed with acid-free pens on acid-free papers or typewritten.

File Contents

Members

Do you have a list of your members with a list of when they became a member, if and when they took an executive position and what that position was? Ideally, a separate page per person is best. You should also include any projects, events, activities, ministries, awards, pin(s) received and a photograph of the person.

Past Presidents

Each past president should write about her time as president, listing what was accomplished during her tenure. A picture of her and her council should be included.

Miscellaneous

Other items which should be indexed, filed alphabetically and considered for archives are:

- list of all presidents, their address, terms in office, and the name of their spiritual
- advisor
- list of executives annually
- award recipients with the date i.e. pins, Maple Leave Service pin
- Life Members and (if you are very lucky) Honorary Life Members with their address and year received
- list of special correspondence such as letters from government leaders, anniversary
- congratulatory letters and plaques
- council newsletters if you produce them
- record of charter with dates, names of charter members

- signed and approved accurate minutes of both elected officers meeting and general meetings
- copy of council policies, financial records, special events programs

Discard Duplicates

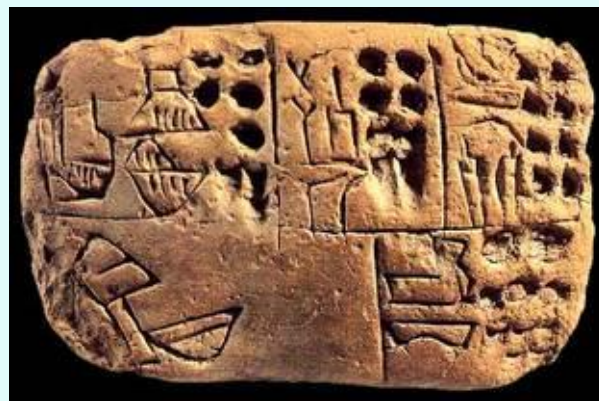
There is no reason to keep duplicate information. However, as the saying goes, *“if in doubt, keep it!”*

In closing, past-president/historian/archivist’s, you have a very important job to keep your council’s history up to date so that, in many years from now, members will look back and be enthralled at all that was accomplished during your days in this essential position.

I remain yours in the sisterhood of the League,
Rosanne Sogan,
Life Member/Historian

Rosanne

“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.” Helen Keller



An example of Ancient Mesopotamian Record Keeping Clay tablet

Elections: Please see the four pages which will explain about Elections.

This is an election year for our Diocesan Council. Letters have been sent to all those who are eligible to run for these rewarding and faith filled positions.

There are a few points I would like to share with you at this time in preparation for the election process that will take place at the Diocesan Annual General Meeting/Convention.

There often is confusion as to whether you are a voting delegate or accredited delegate for conventions. The president (or her representative) of each council will have and instructed vote from her council for this election.

Representation at Annual Conventions

Delegates

(a) **Voting delegates** are presidents of each council comprising the council in session. If the president is unable to attend the annual general meeting/convention, the president elect, a vice-president or an appointed executive shall be designated.

What Voting Powers do you have when you are voting delegate? (BLUE CARD)

(a) **Voting delegates** shall take part in all proceedings and shall have the power to vote on all questions. You will do this by raising your voting card, which you will receive at registration.

The voting delegate carries an instructed vote for:

- (i) Election of officers (Part XVI, Section 5 (a))
- (ii) Increase in per capita fees (Part XVII, Section 1 (b))
- (iii) Amendments to the Constitution & Bylaws (Part XX (a))

(b) Accredited Delegates (WHITE CARD)

(i) **Each parish council** in the diocese concerned may send TWO accredited delegates to the AGM/diocesan convention and ONE accredited delegate to the annual provincial GM/convention. (So please send someone to the provincial convention annually.)

(ii) **Each diocesan council** in the province concerned may send TWO accredited delegates to the provincial AGM/convention and TWO accredited delegates to the annual national general meeting/convention.

What Voting Powers do you have when you are an accredited delegate?

(a) **Accredited delegates** may take part in the business sessions of the annual convention and vote on any question except the elections of officers, amendments to the Constitution & Bylaws and increase in per capita fees.

(b) Officers of the council assembled, honorary life members and life members shall have accredited delegate status. (Part VII, Section 1)

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Confidentiality must be respected at all times during election procedures

Question	Parish	Diocese	Provincial	National
Who can vote?	Every member, including those on the nominations and elections committee	Parish voting delegates	Diocesan voting delegates	Provincial voting delegates
When is the election held?	At the January/ February annual meeting	At the annual convention		At the annual convention
Is there an instructed vote on the first ballot?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can an associate member stand for or be appointed to office?	No	No	No	No
Can an associate member vote?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can an associate member be on a sub-committee?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Who are the voting delegates?	Every member of the council	Every parish president	Every diocesan president	Every provincial president

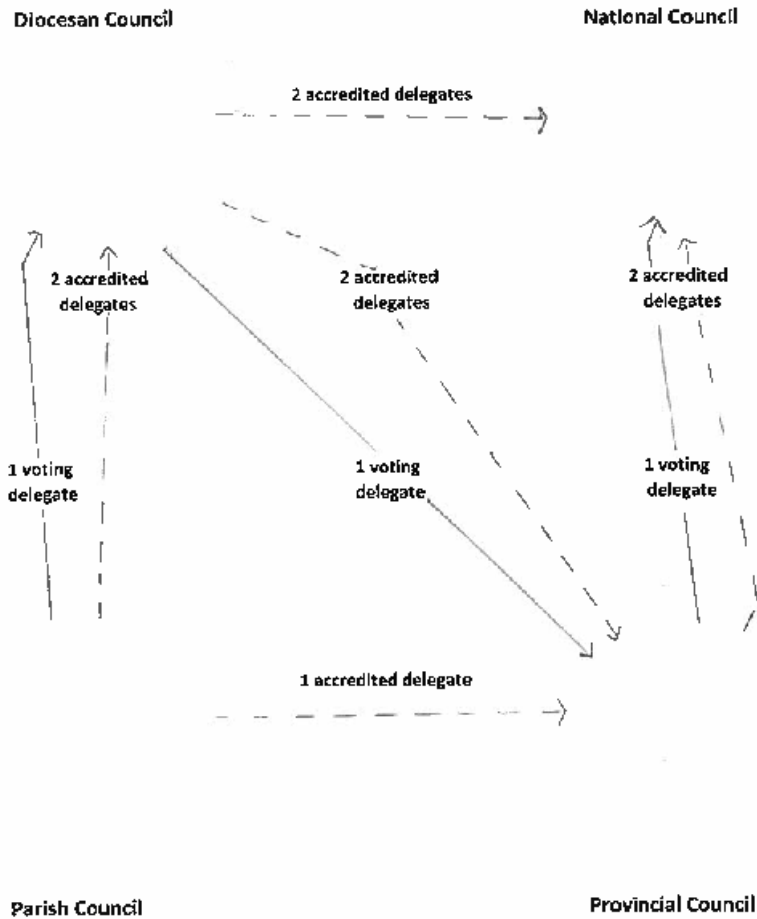
What if the president cannot be in attendance?	Every member of the council	Parish president-elect, vice-president or an appointed elected designate	Diocesan president-elect, vice-president or an appointed elected designate	Provincial president-elect, vice-president or an appointed elected designate
How about accredited delegates?	Each parish can send two to diocesan convention and one to provincial convention	Each diocese can send two to provincial and two to national convention	Each province can send two to national convention	

**Voting and Accredited Delegates
at Annual General Meetings (AGM)/Conventions**

Parish Level Attendance	Description and explanation	Three	Conventions	Voting Priviledges	When you cannot vote	
Presidents	If council has more than one president, they may both attend the convention, however, only one will be voting delegate. You may switch voting priviledges during the convention at the Registration desk.	1	1	✓	President has total voting priviledges on all subjects	N/A
Accredited Delegates	Other executive and/or members from your council. If the president must leave or cannot attend the entire convention her responsibilities would be given to an A.D. She must tgo to Registration to ammend this situation.	2	1	✓	These delegates may vote on most items that are brought to the floor of the convention during the business sessions. Please see next column for exceptions.	May not vote on: * increase per capita * election of officers * amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws
Members at large	A member of any council may attend all conventions	✓	✓	✓	May vote on certain issues i.e. resolutions	As above in Accredited Delegates
Regional Chairwomen	Regional Chairs from all 4 regions	✓	✓	✓	As above in Accredited Delegates	As above in Accredited Delegates
Life Members	Those women who have been past diocesan presidents and have allowed their names to stand at the Provincial level.	✓	✓	✓	As above in Accredited Delegates	They have no voting priviledges
Spiritual Advisor and Lay Spiritual Advisor	Spiritual Advisor for a council at any level of the League	✓	✓	✓	They have no voting priviledges	As above in Accredited Delegates



Voting and Accredited Delegates
Who's who?





Communications

Esther Shaye
Interim Communications Chair

eshaye@gmail.com

Dear Sisters in the League,

Power of Communication

Psalm 19:14

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.”

A few weeks ago, I was thinking about the upcoming Regional Meeting on March 16th and the 104th Convention being held in Kitchener from May 24th to 26th. At the same time, it occurred to me, that I really should learn more about our own Hamilton Diocesan CWL. In short order, google linked me to cwlhamilton.ca, and I found myself spending the rest of the evening learning about all the amazing activity that contribute so much to our Diocese, Regions, and Parishes. As I scrolled through the Directory, I noticed that one position did not have a chair. That position was “Communications.”

Amazing! Communication is my thing. A couple of emails, and one telephone conversation with Joyce Cotter and here we are!

Communication is an essential part of human interaction, and it plays a crucial role in building and maintaining healthy relationships. Whether it is with family, friend, or acquaintances, effective communication can help us understand each other better, avoid misunderstandings, and strengthen our bonds. If indeed, communications are an essential part of human interaction, then it seems that an essential part of our faith journey is Prayer. I started thinking about the prayers we’ve learned, silent prayer, and the Power of Prayer. Prayer is how we communicate with God. Just to make sure, I googled “What is Prayer?” The answer*“Prayer is giving our attention to God in a two-way spiritual relationship where we talk to God, and also listen to him.”*

A Communication Timeline – and the Word of God

Oral Culture

God created Adam and Eve, not just with the ability to speak, but with the ability to speak meaningfully in some kind of language. The speech they knew when they were created, they taught to their children and their children after that. This was the first form of human communication. It was an **Oral Culture** where stories were passed on from one generation to the next. They followed the word of God with the preface “Here is what God has told us.” And the word would pass from generation to generation.

Writing

Around 4000 years before Christ, came the first pictures of simple activities. Things like drawings of a deer, or rabbit, or simple human activity. Soon after, pictures were used to record historical events. Cave drawings, for example, began to supplement the spoken word. As language developed, clay tablets replaced the cave drawings. (Clay was God’s choice of stone for his Ten Commandments.) By the third millennium B.C., the Egyptians developed a paper like substance from papyrus. (A delicate, yet convenient, and easy to use material). Parchment, made from the skins of animals was a more durable option to papyrus, easier to use, but prone to decay. Paper was introduced from Asia to Egypt around 1000 B.C. Soon thereafter came the age of print, where letters, journals, scrolls, and books began to replace oral history.



Codex Sinaiticus, the earliest known manuscript of the Christian Bible, was compiled in the 4th century. In 1844, 43 leaves of a 4th century biblical codex (a collection of single pages bound together along one side) were discovered at St. Catherine’s Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai (hence the name Sinaiticus).

Technology

With the dawning of the 19th century, came technology. The first telegram in North America, using Morse Code, was sent in 1838, crossing 3 km. It wasn’t long before messages could be sent down the road and across the ocean! The first commercial typewriter was patented in 1868, allowing us to print letters, books, and newspapers at a speed unheard of in the past. Around the world, people were learning to read. Knowledge, through the printed word was now possible, not just

to scholars, but to the common man. Imagine our great-great grandparents gathering the family to read their very own Bible!

Fast forward to the 20th century and the invention of telephones, radio, moving pictures, and television which provided new forms of communication withing minutes, then seconds, into our homes, churches and businesses. If the telephone and radio perpetuated the earliest form of communication, “oral culture.” (Although the first telephone was patented in 1876, it did not find its way into homes until the early 20th century.), then it follows that television, patented in 1927, allowed us to perpetuate communication not unlike the “Cave drawings.”

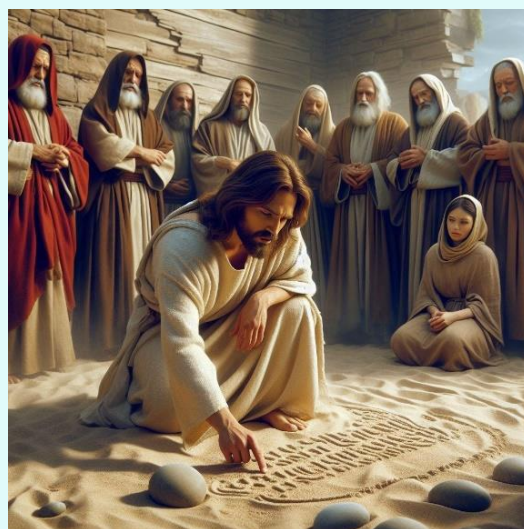
Then came the computer! 🖥️ ☐

It’s hard to believe PC’s have only been around for our use since 1973. Today, the world wide web is universal. Yet, with all of this development, from Adam to Apple, the Word of God and the Power of Prayer remains the most profound communication to guide our lives.

Mathew 7:28-29 reminds us of the greatest communicator of all, “*When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teachings, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of law.*”

Apud Deum in Cordibus Nostis

With God in our Hearts *Esther*





Education and Health

Francesca Simone
Education and Health, Chair

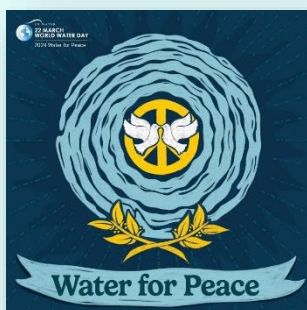
cwleducationandhealth@outlook.com

Dear Sisters in the League,

As you look out, you can see the days growing longer and the plants starting to sprout. Signs that spring is shortly arriving. With spring, we are reminded that our clocks need to spring forward (March 10) for daylight savings time.

Spring is also the season of renewal. With the ending of the long winter nights, as our long journey through Lent, we will reach the rebirth – the Resurrection. What a time of gladness!

March is Nutrition Month. I have written many times about the plate suggestion from Canada's Food Guide (half the plate – vegetables and fruit, one quarter plate – protein, and one quarter plate – whole grain foods). Hopefully, many of you are following these guidelines. Unfortunately, if you have been listening to the news, you would have heard that Health Canada Canadian Food Inspection Agency has recalled many foods for presence of bacteria (listeria), for product mislabeling, or for foreign objects being found inside the packaging. If you are unsure of your grocery product purchases, check the Government of Canada website under "Safety Alerts."



March 22 is World Water Day. This year the theme is Water for Peace. I remember, when I was a young girl, my teacher teaching the history class about ancient civilizations. She emphasized that these ancient peoples realized that they must settle around a body of water in order to survive. They knew, as we do, the importance of this commodity. As a society, we need to conserve water and make sure that everyone has the chance to have fresh drinking water.

Earth Day is April 22. As with water, we need to conserve our precious earth. I know that many of you are recycling which is fantastic. We need to go further. Plastics are killing our planet since they take so long to degrade. Microplastics are everywhere – we even breathe them in and ingest them. If we can, we need to reduce all single use plastics and to use reusable items instead because microplastics are dangerous even to our survival.

March 8th is International Women’s Day. This year, the theme in Canada is “Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress.” If you want to know more about the achievements of women, please check “Women in Canadian History – A Timeline.”

At the beginning of February, I attended a presentation on hemochromatosis. This is a disease where one absorbs more iron from the foods that we consume. This excess iron is stored in the heart, liver, and pancreas which can damage these organs. Although 1 in 200 Caucasians have this defect, 10 percent of those will have the disease severe enough. Many doctors still misdiagnose the ailment in women because the symptoms mimic other diseases. If you feel extremely tired, have pain in your joints, abnormal heartbeat, pain in your abdomen, and / or changes in the colour of your skin, you should see your doctor to check if you have this disease. There is only one way to know, and that is through a blood test.

Do you want to live better longer? Did you know that a 50-year-old woman today can live 14years longer than was thought even ten years ago? If she never smokes, exercises 30 minutes per day, has a normal BMI (Body Mass Index), eats a healthy diet, and only consumes a moderate amount of alcohol, she may live those years healthy enough to do the things she wants when she wants. Since healthy aging is unique to the person, one will probably need to adapt to their capabilities at this time of life. If one is not able to run, walk instead. If one cannot swim, walk in shallow water. One also needs to feed the brain. Occupy the mind (engage the mind) by learning throughout your life. Learn a new language. Learn a new skill. We may all live better longer.

Wishing you and your families a Blessed Easter.

Francesca Simone



Legislation

Kathryn Imperatore
Diocesan Legislation Chair
misiterane@yahoo.com



Dear Sisters,

The Legislation Chair portfolio will be fading out this year and amalgamating with the Resolutions Chair portfolio under the new League structure as Social Justice Chair.

The new National theme for 2024 – 2026 is “Here I am Lord, send me”, delivers a purposeful message. It is calling us to listen to the Spirit’s call to serve God’s people, and to help those less fortunate and those in need. One way the Legislation Chair’s role does this is through advocacy.

Advocacy is a fundamental step at achieving social work’s primary goals of social justice, which are equality and the promotion of human dignity for all of God’s people. God calls us to serve and to use our gifts and talents to help others. We use our voices for those in need, and our advocacy helps to ensure that marginalized communities aren’t forgotten, get equal treatment, and the services they need.

The Legislation and Resolutions portfolios transition seamlessly into the League’s new structured role of Social Justice Chair, and become one.

Social Justice promotes fairness and equality within society. For example, it promotes human rights, and equal economic, educational, and workplace opportunities. Social Justice also promotes safe and secure environments for people and communities.

The national executive/board decided that the National Theme would focus on social justice, and in particular, mental health. We recognize that mental health is not an isolated illness, as it also involves homelessness, violence, abuse, unemployment, and much more.

Sisters, there is certainly no shortage of areas where our services, advocacy, and compassion is needed. I see the need every month when I volunteer for the Out-of-the-Cold Program, a program that feeds the hungry and impoverished. This program was set up by two Hamilton Nuns, who saw the need, rolled up their sleeves, opened their hearts and their mouths to advocate for a program that feeds thousands of impoverished people in the City of Hamilton every year. It is a privilege for me to dedicate two Saturdays a month to serve in this capacity.

Homelessness is a very serious social issue right here in our own community. Ending housing instability and homelessness is critical for improving public health and community well-being. Encampments throughout our communities are dangerous for many reasons, and we should not be encouraging nor supporting them. For example, they contribute to social, mental, and other health issues such as stress and depression. People living in encampments have limited access to healthcare, problems getting enough food, trouble staying safe from violence and physical and sexual abuse, exposure to severe weather, and starting fires with tent heaters - resulting in injuries and deaths. Encampments are unsanitary, and provide no dignity or compassion for God's people.

There are many studies that show much higher rates of physical health issues, and mental health and/or substance use disorders among populations experiencing homelessness than among people who are permanently housed. The key words are permanently housed!

Homelessness is associated with a higher prevalence of mental and substance use disorders when compared to individuals without these illnesses. The concept of mental health and homelessness advocacy has been developed to promote the human rights and dignity of persons with mental health disorders and/or who are

homeless, and to reduce labeling and discrimination. Individuals experiencing homelessness continue to face health issues, including increased mortality due to suicide.

We need to do better as a society, and as servants of God's people. "Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute," (Psalm 82:3). "Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, and please the widow's cause," (Isaiah 1:17).

God calls us to serve and advocate for justice. Homelessness and mental health are two areas where we can advocate for change, as everyone of God's people has a right to live with dignity and the supports, they need to survive and thrive in community and in life.

I encourage all members to become aware and informed about the social justice issues in our community, and to act by either advocating for change or support organizations such as the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, who "support several allied networks working toward our shared mission of preventing and ending homelessness in Canada." You may recall my sharing information about the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness and the lead work they do across Canada, in an earlier communique.

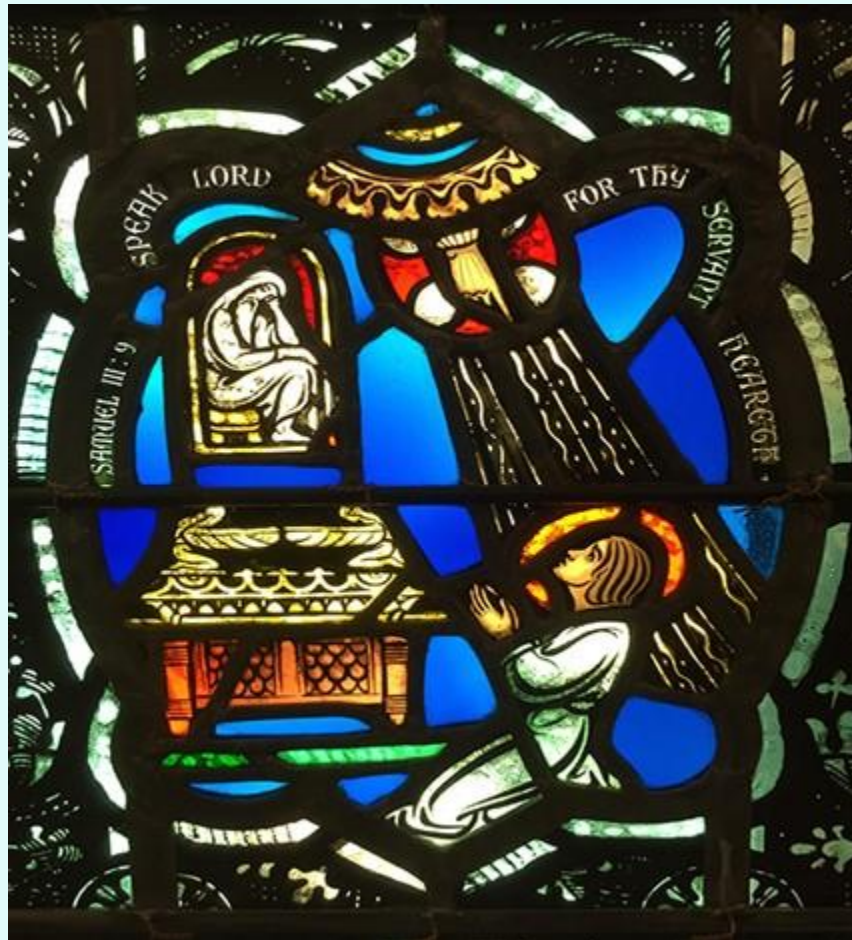
I close with a prayer for courage to advocate for justice.

Kathryn

For Courage to Do Justice

O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others
Open my ears that I may hear their cries;
Open my heart so that they need not be without succor;
Let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong,
Nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich.
Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,
And use me to bring them to those places.
And so open my eyes and my ears
That I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee.

- Alan Paton



Life Members Liaison

Ana Sousa
Life Member Liaison

lifememberliaison@gmail.com

Life Sentence

The Catholic Women's League is celebrating 104 years and, throughout these years, policies have changed, and many have stayed the same. We need change because the League is continually growing, and new ideas are necessary to keep councils healthy and strong while many policies are kept the same to keep our history alive.

Changes include the number of executive members in our councils because of the renaming of standing committees to faith, service and social justice. These

include all the former standing committees united together allowing for subcommittees to be formed to support each other.

Sharing ideas in your parish councils is a wonderful way to see how to improve and/or keep your councils thriving. In my own council we dedicated a meeting discussing what we can do to keep our council strong. We are celebrating 70 years this year, and successfully came up with ideas including reaching out to our senior members who are homebound and unable to come out to meetings.

Our new National theme, which started this year is, “Here I am Lord, Send Me” created by our very own National President, Shari Guinta, and is very appropriate since our motto is for God and Canada. We are honored that Shari will be attending our Diocesan Convention on May 25 and May 26 at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Kitchener this year. All are encouraged to attend and what a wonderful opportunity to support our National President at our convention.

Together we can all keep the League strong.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel continue to help and support you and your council to continue your hard work for God and Canada.

Respectfully submitted,
Ana Sousa, Life Member Liaison

Ana





Hamilton / Brant Regional

Colleen Ionson

Hamilton-Brant Regional Chair

hamiltonchaircwlhamilton@gmail.com



Dear League Sisters,

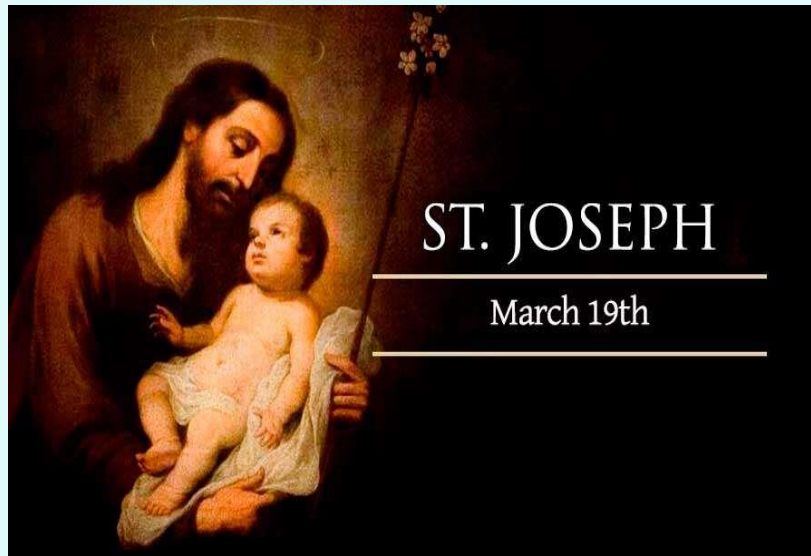
In my capacity of Hamilton – Brant Regional Chair, it is my responsibility to serve as a liaison between parish councils and the diocesan council within the Hamilton - Brant regions, so that the voice of parish presidents is heard around the diocesan table. I attend diocesan executive meetings as a representative of the parish council presidents within the Hamilton and Brant regions.

I am also responsible for sharing information and communications in a timely and effective manner, in both directions. My duties also include fostering close relationships with parish council presidents, dealing with regional concerns and to reporting them back to diocesan.

Another responsibility I have, is to plan, organize and chair a Fall and Spring Hamilton – Brant Regional Meeting. As you know, the Hamilton – Brant Regional Secretary, Mary D’Orazio, our two host parish councils, and I are busy preparing to welcome our members to the Spring Hamilton/Brant Regional Meeting. We have a wonderful day planned for you, and I look forward to seeing you there.

Did you know that we celebrate St. Joseph on March 19th? St. Joseph was an ordinary man, yet his ability to see and communicate the presence of God made him extraordinary. St. Joseph protected and cared for Jesus and Mary. By praying

to St. Joseph, he can provide the same to us. ***“O Saint Joseph, here my prayers and obtain my petitions.”*** Together, let us ask St. Joseph for his strength and courage to listen and to hear God’s voice, and to follow what we know to be right, so that we will continue to serve, care, and protect others as St. Joseph did. The following is a beautiful prayer by the Sisters of St. Joseph entitled **“Prayer to Joseph, Who is Known by Many Titles”**:



Prayer to Joseph, Who is Known by Many Titles

Faithful Joseph:

Teach us to listen and not be afraid to trust
as you did in God's promise.

Loving Joseph:

Teach us to love courageously with a heart
that is free and just.

Protector Joseph:

Teach us to protect one another and all
that belongs to God.

Dreamer Joseph:

Teach us to dream a world where all are neighbours;
a vision illuminated by God's light.

Teacher Joseph:

Teach us to keep the Word of God close to our hearts, and to proclaim it in word and action.

Gentle Joseph:

Teach us to be gentle with our power and
strong in our tenderness.

Parent Joseph:

Teach us to be for all persons a living lesson
of goodness and truth - a blessing for all
generations to come.

Amen.

During the Lenten season, we find quiet time in prayer and reflection. This allows us time to declutter our thoughts and lives. The season of Lent draws us closer to spring, as a time traditionally used for spring cleaning. Cleansing is an important process to prepare our hearts for Easter. It is also an important process for our own self-being. Decluttering our lives from negative energies, and making time to love and care for ourselves, is, in a sense, a means of self “spring cleaning”. Taking care of ourselves is BEEing kind to ourselves.

We are created in God’s own image, and God dwells within each of us. In both the Old and New Testaments (Leviticus 19 and Matthew 19), we are taught to “love your neighbour as yourself.” Proverbs 18:12 are verses about loving yourself and being properly in line with God, and to focus on the importance of humility. While we’re called to self-love, we must do so in a humble way so that our lives point back to God rather than to ourselves.



March is a perfect month for women to refocus on BEEing kind to themselves, as March 8th is International Woman’s Day. As women we are so consumed with serving others that we forget to make time and to care for ourselves.

Ways of being kinder to ourselves according to experts include:

- Confront your inner critic
- Make time for yourself every day and treat yourself weekly
- Practice mindfulness

- Finding your passion and allow yourself time to experience it
- Remember to err is human, and it is how we learn and grow into better people
- Focus on and surround yourself with positive and loving people
- Practice gratitude
- Be your own cheerleader - “You Got This Girl!”
- Acknowledging and addressing negative thoughts
- Making your health a priority
- Remember that self-compassion is not selfish
- Be kind to others

Did you know that minding your own business can help maintain healthier boundaries, and prevent you from overstepping or intruding in others’ lives? Minding your own business presents more learning opportunities. After all, isn’t life one big learning journey? When we meddle in other people’s business, we are involving ourselves in a situation where the outcome doesn’t fall on us.

Meddling can also be a source of disrespect and distrust. For example, we need to trust each other to carry out and fulfill each of our responsibilities in the League, even if it is not the way we would do or want to see things done. The meddler thinks they have a solution to other peoples’ problems, and this usually causes more harm than good, and it can hurt feelings break trust and relations. In fact, meddling is a sign of foolishness rather than wisdom. *“It is an honour for a man to cease from strife:but every fool will be meddling.” (Provers 20:3).*



Have you ever wondered where the term “Mind your own beeswax” came from? Well, there are several stories, one being; women using beeswax to cover up facial

blemishes and smallpox scars in the 1800's. If someone noticed the beeswax on a woman's face, she would tell them to mind their own beeswax.

Focusing on our own lives and goals can help us grow and improve as individuals. It can also give us a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment. Let us always remember to:



Submitted by:
Colleen Ionson
Colleen



KITCHENER REGION

Joanne Gregson
Kitchener Regional Chair

kitchenerchair@gmail.com

Membership drives have been going on throughout the Kitchener Region. Great news last week when I attended the re-activation of St. John, CWL in Guelph, along with President, Joyce Cotter and Treasurer, Mary Clark. Pictured is the new St. John Council Executive with Spiritual Advisor Father Valentine Onwunjiogu.





On February 18th, I was given the opportunity and pleasure of presenting the 70th Anniversary certificate to the St. Aloysius Catholic Women's League, Kitchener, on behalf of President Joyce Cotter, at their celebration following the Mass celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop Wayne Lobsinger. National President of the Catholic Women's League, Shari Guinta was also in attendance to bring greetings and encouragement to her fellow sisters. Mary Clark attended this special event as well.



New President - Catherine Bennett

The Annual Convention is fast approaching. If you wish to be a volunteer to help with the many parts from registration, vendors, silent auction, etc., please contact one of the Executive or your Regional Chair. Reminder to send in your auction forms or bring them along to your Regional Meeting with your items.

As it is the time of year when elections are taking place, please remember to complete the two information update forms, the national and the diocesan available on the websites, as well as send a copy to the regional chair.

Respectfully submitted by Joanne Gregson
Joanne

St. Thomas Aquinas Council, Wiarton

Submitted by Debbie Heard



Pictured are members from St. Thomas the Aquinas Council, Wiarton making Rosaries and chaplets.



Northern Region

Nancy Skiba

Northern Regional Chair

northchaircwlhamilton@gmail.com

Greetings from the Northern Region.

Our regional meeting is fast approaching. This year it will be held at Sacred Heart Parish in Walkerton on Saturday March 23rd beginning at 9:00 am with Mass. Father Tom Moisan will be the celebrant. Many of us remember Father Tom when he was the Hamilton Diocesan Spiritual Advisor for the CWL. Mark your calendars. I hope to see all councils being represented on the 23rd . Also, the convention is coming quickly. As you already know, it is in Kitchener this year at the Double Tree/Hilton May 25th /26th . After attending the preconvention meetings, I know it will be a fantastic convention.

Our councils in the north continue to work in their parishes, in their communities, and beyond. The motto “Here I am Lord, send me” is one that each of our councils in the north strive to follow.

Many of our councils have been involved with the World Day of Prayer which was held on March 1st , 2024. This year it was written by WDP committee of Palestine.

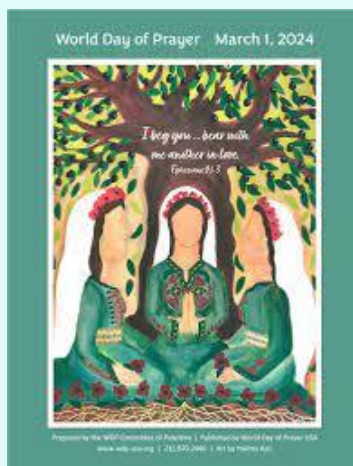
Following is a very powerful prayer written by the women of Palestine.

We pray for women, who even now are losing children and other family members. We pray that their strength be a beacon of resilience, as they endure all challenges and pain with grace. Grant them courage to navigate adversity. And may their aspirations for peace and prosperity shine brightly in the midst of these difficulties. In this time of war, we pray for the healing of hearts and the restoration of peace. May compassion prevail over hatred, and may the suffering of all those affected by the war be alleviated. Grant them strength, solace, and hope for a brighter and harmonious future. We pray for all families who have lost members; for the kidnapped, the missing, and all who are still under the rubble. May the spirit of God grant them all patience and strength as they wait to be reunited. Lord Jesus, we pray for the end of all wars, especially in the land you called home. You are our Savior, the one who taught us the real meaning of peace. Guide us and give us power to practice peace in our daily lives. Amen.

Respectfully submitted

Nancy

World Day of Prayer Poster 2024



**The deadline for submissions to
The Spectrum Diocesan Newsletter**

For

The May edition is May 4th, 2024

Please send to

president@cwlhamilton.ca

Are you receiving your League Magazine?

- Printed copies of the League magazine are sent out to all Members, 3 times a year, Spring, Fall & Winter.
- Please make sure the mailing address is current, and updated as many magazines are being returned to the National Office.
- Members who prefer the online version and do not wish to have a hard copy, make sure you tell the Vice President/Organization Chair and she will tick off that box when she sends your membership per capita fee into National Office.

Immaculate Conception Council, Formosa



Immaculate Conception Christmas Lunch



St. Mary of the Visitation Council, Cambridge

Submitted by Carol O'Brien



Members of St. Mary of the Visitation Council enjoyed a presentation on Human Trafficking with guest speaker, Donna McKay



As part of their Lenten Journey, members are watching Season 1 of "The Chosen" with Spiritual Advisor Father Ed

Members are participating in painting rocks for the 2024 convention with the 52 Reasons to Talk About the CWL



St. Joseph Council, Fergus

Submitted by Sue Beatty



Thank-you to everyone who attended our Annual General Meeting last Sunday! We were all blessed to be able to listen to Luisa Kraus from Elora House as she shared how her faith in God helped her to establish

Elora House which provides safe housing and support for females who are victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Her stories touched our hearts and left an enduring impression on our spirits. We are grateful to Luisa for taking the time to speak to us.

The Catholic Women's League welcomes all parishioners as we walk the Stations of Mary's Way of the Cross on Fridays at 2pm beginning February 16 continuing through Lent to March 22.



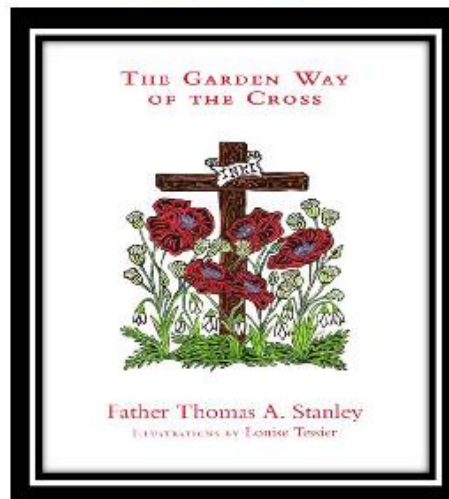


**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Toronto Diocesan Council**

CWL Wednesday, March 20, 2024

7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

The Garden Way of The Cross



Presenters: **Kate O'Quinn, TDC President-Elect/Organization Chair**
Iris McNulty, TDC Spiritual Development Chair

Join us for this Lenten Service, as we pray the Stations of the Cross, "journeying along the botanical path with Jesus"

Register with Shaila D'Souza: shailaflavy@gmail.com

By Tuesday, March 19, 2024

REGISTRATION

To reserve your space send a \$150.00 deposit or full payment to one of the following:

Holy Family Retreat House
Beloved Retreat
121 Victoria St, RR1
Harrow, ON N0R 1G0

Anne-Marie Staley
E-transfer:
amstaley02@outlook.com
519.566.9585

***Please mail this form to the retreat house with your payment
OR email it to Anne-Marie if paying by e-transfer***

Name: _____

Address: _____

Day Phone: _____

Evening Phone: _____

Email: _____

Which date would you prefer?

- April 26 - 28, 2024
- October 18 - 20, 2024

Payment (Please check all that apply)

- In Full - \$350
- Deposit - \$150 (minimum)
- Cheque payable to: Holy Family Retreat House
- E-transfer to: amstaley02@outlook.com

*Deposit is non-refundable 2 weeks prior to the retreat.

*Payment in full must be received 2 weeks prior to the retreat.



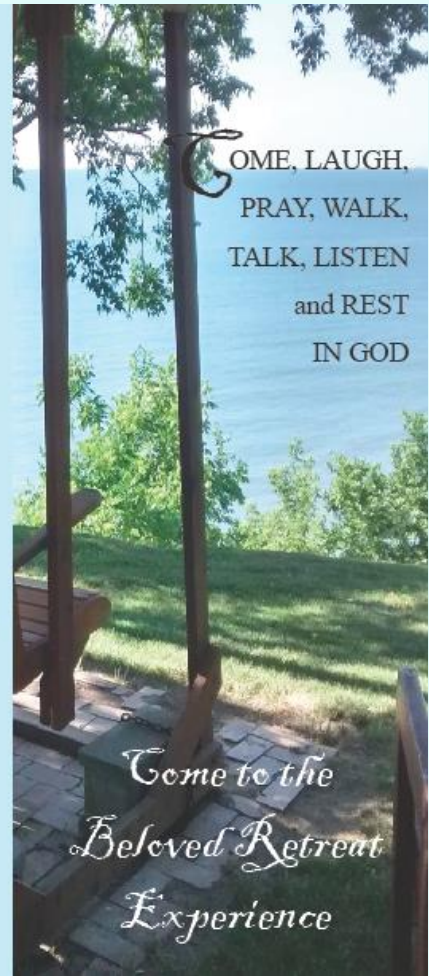
"It far exceeded any expectation I ever had."



"This retreat allowed me to become part of a community, part of a group of people who are Beloved and made me feel Beloved, too."



www.belovedretreat.ca



COME, LAUGH,
PRAY, WALK,
TALK, LISTEN
and REST
IN GOD

Come to the
Beloved Retreat
Experience



Sharing His Promise, Love and Hope!

104th Annual Diocesan Convention

MAY 25-26, 2024

Kitchener Ontario

Registration for the 104th Annual Diocesan Convention in Kitchener is now available! To register, go to the Hamilton Diocese CWL webpage, cwlhamilton.ca and scroll to the middle of the page.

We will be celebrating 104 years of League Sisterhood and service to God and Canada!



Celebrating a special anniversary in your council and would like a commemorative anniversary certificate?

- Please send a formal letter to the Diocesan President requestion this certificate.
- Also, if you would like a certificate from the Provincial Council, please send a formal letter through the Diocesan President two months before celebration date.
- Anniversary certificates from the National Council can be found online at cwl.ca and printed off yourself.

New Member's Information Package

If you would like a welcome letter from the Diocesan President for the parish council "New Member's Information" package, please send a request to [president @cwlhamilton.ca](mailto:president@cwlhamilton.ca)

NOVENA TO OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

April 18 – 26

O God, this day and always, come to our assistance. O Lord, make haste to help us. Glory Be...

Let us take a few moments to recall in a special way our Patroness, the holy mother of Jesus. In her title, Our Lady of Good Counsel, assures us of her maternal care and guidance so that we may more easily know the will of her son. With her we rejoice in the glorious resurrection of that same son and share in her joy, for she believed in Christ's victory over death. It is the same victory that is ours as we enter more deeply into his paschal mystery.

O God, most high and most near, we bring to you the needs of the church and of the world. We rely on the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel to support these prayers. For Pope Francis, may he be guided by the Holy Spirit as he directs the faithful around the world. Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, guide him.

For those who minister to the needs of the Church, may the Good Shepherd always be their model for ministry. Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, guide them.

For our world, that through prayer and penance it may enter an age of peace, the triumph of Mary's heart. Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, guide us.

For the members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, that we may spread decency and harmony throughout our society and persevere in our efforts to become more Christ like. Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, guide us.

For our parish communities and League councils, that all may serve one another with generosity and work to ensure that the rights and dignity of all of God's people are respected and protected. Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, guide us.

For guidance to work together constructively as women of distinct personalities and sensitivities respecting the wisdom, insight and spirit of each member. Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, guide us.

For our Members of Parliament, as they deliberate on political and moral issues. Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, guide them.

For courage to use the gifts with which we have been blessed. Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, guide us.

Prayer: God of heavenly wisdom, you have given us Mary, Mother of Jesus, to be our guide and counsellor, grant that we may always seek her motherly help in this life and so enjoy her blessed presence in the life to come. O, Mother of Good Counsel, Patroness of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, intercede for us, that we may be wise, courageous and loving leaders of the church. Help us dear mother, to know the mind of Jesus, your son. May the Holy Spirit fill us with

reverence for God's creations and compassion for all God's children. May our labours of love on earth enhance the reign of God and may God's gifts of faith and hope prepare us for the fullness of the world to come. Amen.



League Prayer

We humbly pray You, O God our Father, to bless the Catholic Women's League of Canada. Bless our beloved country, our homes and families. Send Your Holy Spirit upon us to give light to our minds and strength to our wills that we may know and fulfil Your great law of charity. Teach us to share with others at home and abroad, the good things You have given us. This we ask through our Lord Jesus Christ and the intercession of our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. Amen.



Mission Statement

The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God Through ministry and service.