

FAITH IN ACTION

January 10, 2021

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 Organization Sub-Cmte Tina McKay
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 Spiritual Advisor Fr. Paul J. Gaudet

Care for our Common Home

"Let us walk together taking care of each other and of Creation, our common home."

-Pope Francis



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the year 2020 fades into the past, it will always be remembered for the unwelcomed challenges it brought into our lives. Beyond these challenges, it will also be remembered as the year we tried something different, especially new ways of reaching out and interacting with each other without being physically present. A year ago, who ever heard of something called "Zoom"?

Online shopping has taken off and you can get practically anything delivered to your door. Churches have not stayed still. Masses have gone online and you can now watch Eucharistic celebrations from practically anywhere in the world. Watching the Christmas Vigil from St. Peter's Basilica with Pope Francis presiding, for example, was amazing. Even here in Ottawa, watching a Sunday Mass from St. Basil Parish which incorporated the cultural and spiritual influences of our Indigenous sisters and brothers in the celebration was uplifting.

The CWL has not remained inactive either. National council put the Summer Speaker Series online, the funeral of our Diocesan 1st Vice President Teresa Psutka was streamed online (659 views), and St. John the Apostle Council hosted an online Inner Healing Retreat. Despite the limitations of our own rules, many councils have been meeting virtually and things are getting done. Some councils have also found creative ways to do their fund raising.

These are only a few examples of the activities that have taken place, but, reflecting on this, it seems that this new year could very well be a year of education and enlightenment. The pandemic has forced so many resources online that we would be foolish not to take advantage of what is available. Even when we can all breathe freely again without masks, some things will have changed forever. Now is a good time to embrace the changes and be part of the leading edge in the League.

Speaking of change, this is the time of year that we make resolutions on how we can be better. In an article for the *National Catholic Register*, Patti Maguire Armstrong has written an article, "[Holy Habits: 20 New Year's Resolutions](#)," which contains many wonderful suggestions for our daily spiritual lives. Pray that whatever changes we embrace enlighten our lives and uplift everyone around us.

Happy New Year 2021!

Love, peace and joy,
 Lynn Lavictoire

FROM THE DIOCESE

DIOCESAN SPIRITUAL ADVISOR – Fr. Paul Gaudet

TIME OF CHANGE



2020 has been a challenging year for many of us, if not all. The Covid-19 pandemic has shaken every aspect of our lives. The pandemic has caused financial difficulties for many families and individuals, many people have experienced social isolation due to lockdowns and fear of being infected by the pandemic, leading some to experience mental health issues such as anxiety, loneliness and addictions. These problems have been compounded by the restrictions on coming together and celebrating our faith. Many of us have experienced the lack of ability to express our faith in our usual way by attending Mass, adoration, retreats or Bible studies. Many may ask during these times: where is God?

When we are opened to change, God is always with us. At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus reached out to ordinary people like Peter and Andrew and changed their lives because of their willingness to try something new. Many saints have changed their way of living and thinking in order to bring the love and charity of God to others. During this pandemic we are called to change. We are called to change the way we worship, interact with others and how we reach out to others. It is a time for us to reach out to those in our community who are suffering financial, mental or spiritual difficulties in whatever way we can: making a phone call, picking up groceries, sharing a prayer.

I pray that every CWL Council in the Archdiocese will be able to change and renew their outreach to their communities as a way of showing that no matter what challenges we face, God is always with us to help us recognize the challenge and choose to change the lives of others. God bless.

**THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA
OTTAWA DIOCESAN COUNCIL 98th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020 & 2021
Saturday, May 1, 2021**

Business Session at the Almonte Civitan Club
9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

With Registration beginning at 8:00 A.M.

500 Almonte St.,
Almonte, ON K0A 1A0

&

Closing Mass at Holy Name of Mary Church – 4:30 P.M.
134 Bridge St.,

Almonte, ON K0A 1A0

ONLY VOTING & ACCREDITED DELEGATES MAY REGISTER

St. Mary's Council is looking forward to hosting this event!

DIOCESAN LIFE MEMBER LIAISON – Moira Matthews**PRAYER**

The Oxford dictionary describes prayer as: 1. a solemn request or thanksgiving to God or to an object of worship; 2. a set form of words used for this such as *The Lord's Prayer*; 3. a religious service such as *Morning Prayer*; 4. the act of praying; and 5. entreaty to a person.

Reading these descriptions highlights the fact that praying is a very deliberate act, something that is not entered into lightly or without conscious thought. Praying is something that most people do maybe once or twice a day or spontaneously as the occasion arises; others do it several times a day if they pray the *Liturgy of the Hours*. Either way, most of us turn to God for help and comfort during times of stress, anxiety and despair, asking for help for ourselves and for others.

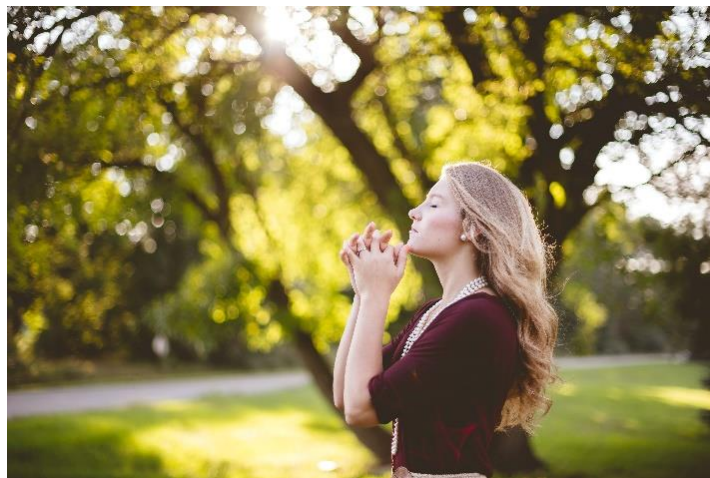
The CWL has always relied on the "praying arm of the League" by asking the elders of the League to pray for the membership in general and their council sisters in particular. The Life Members of our Diocese are called upon frequently to pray for members or others who have reached out to ask for prayers. Many who are aware that they are being prayed for say that they have a feeling of peace knowing that many people, mostly unknown to them, are lifting them up in prayer. In fact, the Life Members have a nickname of "Prayer Warriors" as they receive several requests for prayers each week!

So, prayer is an integral part of our daily life. At the beginning and ending of each day and many times in between, we ask, implore and thank our God for everything.

I think that this prayer says it all:

Happy Moments Praise God,
Difficult Moments Seek God,
Quiet Moments Worship God,
Painful Moments Trust God,
Every Moment Thank God.

- Anonymous



REMEMBRANCE DAY -CWL *Lest We Forget*

On Wednesday, November 11, 2020, the *Lest We Forget* wreath from The Catholic Women's League of Canada was laid by a member of the Royal Canadian Legion as physical attendance restrictions were in place due to the pandemic. This would have been my third time laying down the wreath as a representative of the National Council of the CWL.



There is something really special that happens when attending in person. The emotions, the solemnity, the speakers, the ambiance, the veterans, the crowds, etc., all pull one into a place of remembrance. This year the event was small and most people attended virtually. I visited the National War Memorial in the afternoon, carried all our members in my heart and prayed for love, peace and joy for all who love our country – for God and Canada.

DIOCESAN ADVENT MASS – Hosted by Immaculate Heart of Mary Council

This year our regular Advent Retreat could not be held. However, Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) Council found a way to bring us together for an Advent Mass on Saturday, November 28, 2020. Led by our Diocesan Spiritual Chair Janet Warren and organized by IHM council members, this was an opportunity to see a few of our members come out in joyful anticipation of the coming of Christ. As Pope Francis said, “Advent increases our hope, a hope which does not disappoint. The lord never lets us down.” This gathering, although small in number, was still a way to allow Christ's love come into our hearts and lift us up in His joy. Members who attended the Advent Mass enjoyed it and some said they wouldn't miss if for anything!



The Mass was presided by Fr. Pierre Champoux who did a wonderful homily on the Symbols of Advent. A copy of this teaching was put on our diocesan website for everyone to read. Our Diocesan Spiritual Advisor Fr. Paul Gaudet could not be with us due to illness and we missed his words of wisdom.

A big thank you goes out to all the ladies who helped organize this event and for being a big part of the one body of Christ as we began our journeys in Advent. Saint Josemaria Escriva said, “Advent is here. What a marvellous time in which to renew your desire, your nostalgia, your real longing for Christ to come – for him to come every day to your soul in the Eucharist.”

Although IHM hosted this first COVID-19 CWL Advent Mass with joy, Council President Frances Murphy-Pike was unable to attend due to unfortunate circumstances but was with us in spirit. As our Life Member Liaison Moira Matthews expressed, “it was a very 'prayerful' Mass and fitting to our Advent journey.”

DIOCESAN ORGANIZATION SUB-COMMITTEE – Tina McKay

25TH EPISCOPAL ANNIVERSARY AND FINAL MASS ARCHBISHOP TERRENCE PRENDERGAST

While the amalgamation of the Archdiocese of Ottawa and the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall to form the Archdiocese of Ottawa-Cornwall was a momentous undertaking over the past year, it was not the only significant change for our region. Ottawa-Cornwall Archbishop Terrence Prendergast also announced his pending retirement, allowing for the appointment of the now new Archbishop Marcel Damphousse. Archbishop Prendergast's 25th Episcopal Anniversary Mass and his final Mass, took place on Thursday, December 3, 2020 at the beautiful Notre-Dame Cathedral on Sussex Drive in Ottawa.

The CWL Ottawa Diocesan Council President Lynn Lavictoire graciously accepted limited invitations to attend this important celebratory Mass. As a CWL member who is newly supporting the Ottawa Diocesan Council, I offered to attend if there was an opportunity and I felt extremely blessed that I was able to attend this Mass.



From the moment I entered the cathedral, a truly palpable feeling of joy was felt which remained with me during the entire Mass. Being two meters apart from every other person could not change the notable energy and feeling of love within the cathedral that evening as Archbishop Prendergast presided over his final Mass. The Archbishop's homily was moving and important. He expressed his thanks and gratitude to his family, friends and those who supported him and worked with him while he served in his role over the last 13 years. He spoke of the amalgamation of the Archdiocese of Ottawa and the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, and he spoke at length about the challenge we face today in the task of evangelization and about Saint Frances Xavier's missionary work which was not unlike the apostle St. Paul's work 15 centuries earlier.

This was to fulfil the mission Jesus gave his disciples: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation." Archbishop Prendergast also shared his belief that the Lord has chosen Archbishop Marcel Damphousse for this role because of his commitment to the New Evangelization and his other gifts. He is also about "the team"; he is organized and he is determined. Archbishop Prendergast is convinced the new archbishop's leadership will be a real blessing to all.

We will greatly miss Archbishop Prendergast while we warmly welcome his successor, the new Archbishop Marcel Damphousse.

ARCHBISHOP MARCEL DAMPHOUSSE'S INAUGURAL MASS

On May 6, 2020, following the retirement announcement by Archbishop Terrence Prendergast and the amalgamation of the Archdiocese of Ottawa and the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, Holy Father Pope Francis appointed Bishop Marcel Damphousse as Coadjutor Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Ottawa-Cornwall, transferring him from the office of Bishop of Sault Sainte Marie. Following Archbishop Prendergast's final Mass as spiritual leader for the Ottawa-Cornwall

Archdiocese on December 3, 2020, Pope Francis officially elevated Archbishop Marcel Damphousse to lead the archdiocese on December 4, 2020.

I was honored to attend Archbishop Marcel Damphousse's inaugural Mass at the Notre-Dame Cathedral on Sussex Drive on Tuesday, December 8, 2020, a celebration Mass in its own right. Archbishop Damphousse's homily began with him saying his ministry begins under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception and the patroness of the Cathedral and the Ecclesiastical Province. Archbishop Damphousse further shared that he would not want to begin his responsibility without allowing himself to be infused and moved by the power of the Spirit. He spoke of Mary, who was present with the apostles on the day of Pentecost, to be an exceptional help to us today. Through her intercession, she will be able to bring us back to that fundamental moment of our Church, the day of Pentecost, the day when, thanks to the Holy Spirit, the Apostles were able to successfully begin a mission that seemed impossible at the outset.

Archbishop Damphousse spoke about the many journalists approaching him in the days before his inaugural Mass wanting to know more about him. He acknowledged that this is a new beginning for him but also a new beginning for us, the people of God of the Archdiocese of Ottawa-Cornwall. He shared that, like all of us, he can have days struggling with God's plans and like Mary there are questions such as "Why me Lord?" "I don't understand," and "How is this going to work?" Archbishop Damphousse shared that his trust in the Lord has played a great part of who he is today and what he has been able to accomplish. He shared that we can't go far in life without trust, without that confidence that, no matter what, we are loved and appreciated despite the limits and failures we may face. Archbishop Damphousse also reminded us that, on the same day as his inaugural Mass, Pope Francis had decreed a special year dedicated to St. Joseph. The archbishop went on to say, "as I begin my ministry here, I can hear God telling me: 'Do not be afraid.' I will have Saint Joseph as a model so that my faith can help me see God at work in my life and in the people, I am called to serve."



We warmly welcome Archbishop Marcel Damphousse as our new spiritual leader for the Ottawa-Cornwall Archdiocese.

Note: there is also an article from the Ottawa Citizen which was posted on the Archdiocesan Facebook page the day after the new Archbishop's inaugural Mass (<http://bit.ly/3aSt0pC>).

DIOCESAN TREASURER – Diana Baines

Welcome to 2021, hopefully a better year than the last one. With the arrival of the first vaccines, we can hope for a return to some normalcy in our meetings, conventions and events. We must move slowly, protecting ourselves and others, but let's keep in touch, in safe and healthy ways.

This following poem is a favorite of mine. I first heard it at a Military Ordinariate Provincial Convention, probably in the late '70s. I recall my own family complaining that I only made the good stuff for CWL meetings (I can assure you; they weren't deprived).

WILL YOU MAKE SQUARES?

It's six o'clock, my home's a mess,
 And dinner's running late,
 The baby's lost her soother,
 My son just lost his date.
 The phone is ringing. I hear thunder
 Coming down the stairs.
 "It's for you Mom, it's Mrs. Jones.
 She says, 'Will you bring Squares?'"

The Bishop came last Sunday,
 A very fancy event;
 Finest linen, finest china,
 (And we didn't charge a cent!)
 The pastor put on his good suit,
 Patricia put on airs.
 Sue and I washed dishes,
 And, oh yes, we brought the Squares.

I love our Spiritual Retreat,
 It fills me with such peace
 To be one with God and world.
 At last, I've found my place.
 I'd love to linger here a while,
 Perhaps to say some prayers,
 But I'm in charge of making tea
 And setting out the Squares.

My kitchen's filled with luscious scents,
 Hubby watches as I bake,
 He sees me chop the fruit and nuts,
 He sees me ice the cake.
 "Now tell me dear" he coyly asks,
 "Who are these goodies for?"
 "For God and Canada," I say
 And whisk them out the door.

I admit I've been discouraged,
 I've asked myself, "Who cares?"
 But I found out, I went JUST ONCE
 Without my precious Squares.

When I've organized my last Bazaar
 And raffled my last prize,
 I'll not be sad to see it end,
 I'll welcome my demise.
 For through it all I've loved a lot,
 And laugh until it hurts,
 And in the end, I'm very sure,
 I'll get my just desserts.
 But should my Master summon me,
 And catch me unawares,
 Consider this: Now, at my wake,
 Who'll make the bloomin' Squares?



DIOCESAN LIFE MEMBER – Joanna Sisk**AN ATTITUDE OF PRAYER**

Greetings, I am preparing this on December 1, 2020, for the January 2021 issue of *Faith in Action*. As we begin the new year 2021, I was reminded of New Year's Eve 21 years ago when I was working as a charge nurse in a long-term care home in Toronto while the world was nervous about the Y2K (the change from 1999 to 2000). The world was holding its breath wondering what would happen at midnight.

Who would, at this time last year, ever have expected that we would experience a world pandemic? So, as we enter the year 2021, we need prayer even more. Prayer inspires us and service fulfills us. Prayer, put into action, best describes a life of faith in God. A life of faith in God is a life of balance between prayer and service. One is not really authentic without the other.

We see how Jesus did that in His life. He would spend time in prayer and then was able to help people in so many ways. He taught, He healed and at last gave His life for the salvation of the world.

When we die to ourselves, for the sake of others, we are living by these same principles. May we be encouraged to pray and act in the name of Jesus in the best ways we can.

Prayer doesn't just happen when we kneel or put our hands together and focus expecting things from God. Prayer is...

Thinking positive and wishing good for others is a prayer.

When you hug a friend. That's a prayer.

Reach out and call someone, send a card, smile. That's a prayer.

Sit at the bed side of a sick, elderly or dying person. That's a prayer.

Wear a mask and get tested to protect ourselves and others. That's a prayer.

When you cook something to nourish family and friends. That's a prayer.

When we send off our near and dear ones and say, "drive safely" or "be safe." That's a prayer.

When you are helping someone in need, by giving your time and energy. You are praying.

When you forgive someone in your heart. That is prayer.

Prayer is a vibration, a feeling, a thought.

Prayer is the voice of love, friendship and genuine relationships.

Prayer is an expression of your silent being.

Keep praying always. And let us continue to pray for one another.



I pray that you receive the strength you need for the year 2021.

2021 PROVINCIAL CONVENTION NEWS

2021 PROVINCIAL CONVENTION INTERIM HELPER – Nancy Grimshaw

Planning for our convention in the midst of a pandemic has proven to be quite a challenge. Our committee members continue to meet via a Zoom call once a month to provide updates on what each member is doing as well as learning of the new updates and protocols that are coming down from the national and provincial levels. Our chairs have shown great flexibility and ingenuity in the way they have responded to these changes.

The registration package is typically prepared and taken to the winter meeting of the Provincial CWL Council which would be late January or early February. However, with COVID-19 we are still faced with several unknowns. Although the hotels and conference centre have provided their COVID-19/CleanStay protocols to protect both staff and visitors in their facility, their restaurant remains closed until sometime in January, delaying the ability to plan for meals.

While social distancing remains a part of our culture, opportunities for group activities have to be planned with this in mind and limited based on capacity. Therefore, the number we can have in the main ballroom will affect how many can attend this event.

Many of our committee members have been tailoring plans to accommodate for this. The typical bus tours will be replaced with information on places to see and activities available to do on one's own. Since a Light Rail Train Station is very close to the Conference and Event Centre, our members can be downtown in minutes to explore our Nation's Capital. Consideration is also being given to having entertainment opportunities in the conference centre where we know there will be enough space to social distance.

Due to limits on some traditional venues such as our churches, we are also planning to have "streaming" of some of the events such as the Opening Mass.

The plans for the prayer room were designed with social distancing in mind. This will, however, limit the number that can be present in the room. At our most recent meeting, we were introduced to an online prayer room "mockup" by one of our Liturgy chairs. Imagine logging on to a beautiful scene and selecting prayers, or the Rosary with music, or perhaps you may prefer silence for your time in prayer. While this is still a work in progress, it generates a lot of excitement and inspiration among our committee members.

Discounts have been secured with our major airlines and Via Rail for our members that choose not to drive.

You are encouraged to support our fundraisers. We were unable to advertise at the previous conventions, but we have a fundraising flyer on the Ottawa Diocesan website as well as on the Ontario Provincial website. The convention sling bag is a great way to keep a few items organized for a quick trip out or to use at future CWL meetings and conventions. Consider purchasing our rosary bracelets for yourself or as a gift. Not only is it a beautiful piece of jewelry, it is a readily available accessory for your time in prayer.

Since we were also unable to advertise Ottawa as the location of the 2021 convention, as has been the tradition for previous conventions, our members have worked to put together a socially distanced video to advertise our event. Please look for it on the Ottawa Diocesan Website.

Our committee is working hard to plan a convention taking into account the ever-changing protocols that this pandemic is bringing our way. Sadly, we will all miss the opportunity to socialize

in the usual way with our sisters in the League that we only see at these conventions. While this may be a convention like none before it, it may also be the beginning of some new opportunities to provide both a virtual and in person experience that may pave the way for future conventions.

Please pray for the continued success of this committee.



From top left to right and then each row following:

Rita Lemay, Marilyn Olsen, Nancy Grimshaw, Hilda Chow, Carmen Buzzell, Sue Ann Soulliere, Moira Matthews, Feilan Xiabaker, Lynn Lavictoire, Mary Ross, Tina McKay, Judy Young, Roxanne Leblanc-Lemieux, Jan Davidson, Sonya LaRocque, Theresa Schopf, and Angela Gaudet.

Missing from the photo are: Frances Chicot, Fr. Paul Gaudet, Gerda Franssen, Cindy Zorgel, Lynn Pomainville, Colleen Perry and Archbishop Marcel Damphousse.

Catholic Women's League Ontario 2021 Provincial Convention Fundraiser

<p style="text-align: center;">Rosary Bracelet with CWL Charm \$30.00 (plus shipping)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Various colour combinations of beads. Handmade by our sisters in the League.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Convention Sling Bag + Notebook \$20.00 (plus shipping)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Side-zippered main compartment on this 600-denier polyester bag with two front pockets. Adjustable shoulder strap and a built-in key ring.</p>
	
<p><i>Beautiful for yourself and great for gift-giving.</i></p>	
<p>To purchase these items, please contact Sue Ann Soulliere at 613-979-5757 or email sueannsas@bell.net</p>	

FROM THE PARISHES

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY – Council President Joan Lepage

I have a little story to tell you. When I was seven years of age, my aunt who was very active in the CWL, gave me a medal of Our Lady of Good Counsel and asked me to ask her every day to pray for us and bring peace in the world. Of course, in those days, you listened to what adults told you, and to this day, when I say my morning offering, I ask Our Lady of Good Counsel to watch over us and bring peace in the world. How simple it was in those days to get children to pray, etc.



When I was doing the Rosary each month at Assumption School, I used to suggest to the students to ask Our Lady, as it was Assumption School, to watch over them each day and keep them safe. I often wonder if any of them are doing it. Of course with COVID-19, I haven't been at the school since last March and volunteers are not allowed this semester so who knows when we will start the Rosary again.

Stay safe and God bless.

DIVINE INFANT – Council Member Jackie Kierulf

EXPERIENCING HOLY MOMENTS

One of my favorite Bible quotes is the passage from Matthew: "For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be" (6:21). I think of that treasure as God's love. In spite of all my sinfulness, I am loved. When we are able to trust and surrender to him, we have the potential to experience holy moments, those treasures of the heart of Jesus that he wants us to have.

I used to think that holy moments were reserved for saints, priests and individuals in religious orders, but they aren't. God's love has no bounds, and that is also true of holy moments. They are there for all of us to experience if we are open to receiving them.

In a holy moment, there is a separation of ourselves from the world. Our cluttered and chaotic world is absent. Those things don't belong in a holy moment, because they don't matter. What does matter is our focus on the Lord.

We may think that there's not much of an opportunity for holy moments during this pandemic. We may feel detached, frustrated, sad and helpless. But it is in these times of crisis that we need God even more.

Was there a time we felt that deep love of God for us? It may have been the peace we felt when we held our loved one's hand and they took their last breath. It may have been a hymn that we heard or even sang that brought us great joy. It may have been a time that we knelt before the Blessed Sacrament and cried because not only did we feel the pain of God's suffering for our salvation but felt grateful beyond words for his love for us.

The peace, the joy, the love that holy moments bring are our treasures.

Excerpt from "Keeping the Faith Amid the Pandemic" from Our Sunday Visitor. ©OSV Publishing. www.osvnews.com Used by permission, no other use of this material is authorized.

ST. BASIL – Council President Elizabeth Larmond Elliot

MEMBERS DISCUSSION ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN HEALING THE CHURCH

In October 2020, St. Basil's CWL Council hosted a two-part virtual discussion on the Role of Women in Healing the Church. This event was inspired by Sister Nuala Kenny SC's presentation for the 100th anniversary of the CWL. Twenty people took part.

In the first session, following Sister Kenny, we examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our lives and we proposed ways to help others during the coming winter. When examining Christ's encounters with women, we saw that not only was he comfortable with women and treated them with respect, but, most radically, he included them in his ministry. We also saw that his approach toward all people was counter-cultural to the traditional way of using power and authority.

In the second session, we continued to look at Sr. Kenny's analysis and agreed that the Church needs healing and we sought answers to the questions: "What needs to be changed?" "How can this be done?" and "How can we move forward?"

Some issues identified were: entrenched exclusivity; the ongoing use of exclusive language; a lack of respect felt by many, especially women; the growing gap between the practices promoted by the Church and the everyday lives of people; sexual abuse in the Church which continues to be a major concern; some liturgical rituals that are irrelevant and seem stuck in a time warp; and the need to move from sin-centered, confession-oriented moral theology to cultivation of virtue and formation of conscience and discernment.



Actions and changes that we think will help address these issues include:

- Advocating for a liturgy that has less emphasis on rules and more on the meaning of the liturgy.
- Finding ways for women to have more visibility in the liturgies e.g., have a woman give a reflection at Mass.
- Developing ways for women (and laity in general) to exercise our priestly ministry.
- Looking at other Christian traditions to see how they have achieved changes.
- Using our networks and contacts at diocesan and national levels to work together for change.
- Wherever possible, amending the readings to more inclusive language.
- Bringing our faith up to date through adult education.
- Having no tolerance for unacceptable behaviours
- Addressing the misogyny that prevents change and this includes addressing the fear factor in which this misogyny is rooted.
- Promoting acceptance and solidarity with LGBTQ2F members; displaying a symbol to show that they can feel safe in our church.
- Following the progress of the research project at St. Paul's University which is studying the gap between real-life and the practices of the Church.
- Advocating for courses on women in the Church at St. Paul University that would focus on the role of women in the Church both historical and current, and on women theologians.
- Recognizing the value of dramatic gestures in motivating change: look for one, something practical which is parish wide.
- Maintaining hope and following Fr. Ruth's example of "Why not?" when considering change.

There appeared to be total agreement in the group to continue this discussion of women in healing the Church. There was also a desire to include all parishioners who are interested.

We will undertake some specific actions in the short term:

1. We hope to be able to have women present reflections at Mass before the scheduled readings.
2. The planning group is preparing a recommended list of readings and videos dealing with the subjects of interest.
3. We will also make a list of resource people who would present webinars on key topics.
4. We want to develop a better understanding of the issue of inclusive language using webinars or videos.
5. We will reach out to parishioners during this pandemic winter by setting up telephone committees.

A key component of our plan moving forward is to educate ourselves on the current thinking about women's role in the Church. For example, just recently in his October 2020 video, <https://thepopevideo.org/october-women-in-leadership-roles-in-the-church/>, the Holy Father expressed his desire for having more women in leadership roles in the church organization. Pope Francis says explicitly: "...we must emphasize the feminine lay presence because women tend to be left aside. We must promote the integration of women, especially where important decisions are made."

With these words in mind, we need to ask ourselves: "What does this mean?" and "How can we achieve the Holy Father's directive?" Let us do that together over the next several months. We journey in hope.

ST. FAUSTINA – Council President Barb d'Entremont

2020 is a year like no other. In every news cycle there is something about COVID-19. We have all been through a gamut of emotions. It has been long and often hard.

When the Provincial CWL chose *loneliness* as a theme last year, they had no idea how fitting it was going to be in 2020. However, what loneliness did not know, is we are a resilient species. Our seniors have learned to Zoom and FaceTime. Grandchildren have put their grandparents in their contacts and loaned them iPads. The technology that seemed to take away human contact has brought us together. Cards and letters have made a comeback and phone calls and emails have increased. Many of us have gotten back to basics. Small family gatherings, are now known as staying in your bubble. People are making food from scratch, shopping once a week, and rarely eating out. Kind of reminds you of when life seemed simpler!

As women of faith and service, it has meant finding a new way to do what God calls us to do. Saint Peter tells us, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" Peter 4:10. At St. Faustina, that has meant weekly email check ins with our members and the occasional phone call. It has meant prayer requests and support virtually. We have sewn masks for a local school where children have more financial and social challenges with each member donating supplies, time, and skill as able. Since outdoor church services started at our parish, we offer reusable masks for a free will donation at every Mass, take contact tracing attendance, read, or assist in Mass in any way possible. We have called parishioners whom we have not seen return to church to ensure they are well and to offer support as needed. Others have worked on archiving St. Margaret Mary's CWL history in a memory book as we officially became the St. Faustina CWL. It is important that we continue to be kind and understanding with each other and use our talents and our gifts for the glory of God, even if that looks vastly different in 2020.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA – Council President Jean Anderson

The council of Our Lady of Fatima had a very successful baby shower for the needs of The Miriam Centre, St. Mary's Home, and Birthright on October 3rd and 4th. We set up a playpen outside the church doors to greet folks and collect baby items. We filled a car with baby clothes and diapers plus raised \$430.00 in cash for this worthy cause. God's goodness to us knows no bounds. Thank you to everyone for their prayers for our council members under COVID-19 quarantine; they are all clear! God Bless.

CALL ME SISTER

Call me Sister, dear sister in Christ. Yes, that is what you may call me, for that is what I am in the Catholic Women's League of Canada. In promoting sisterhood among its membership, I would like to share with you some of our stories and those of the League sisters that reflect the genius of our League. It is what we all crave deep down in our spiritual grass roots. This desire for sisterhood, moving under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and kissed by our patroness Our Lady of Good Counsel, manifests its presence mightily in our League as we strive to "serve God and Canada."

But how did we get started on this high road of service 100 years ago? Let's digress back to Montreal near the turn of the twentieth century and the dream of our foundress, Bellelle Guerin. In 1917, four members of Montreal's Catholic Women's Club, Bellelle Guerin, Margaret Jones, Margaret Fortier and Agnes Bury, united together to extend an invitation to similar Catholic Women's groups across Canada to standardize their aims and objectives. Units of the Catholic Women's League had been established in Edmonton in 1912, Montreal in 1917, Toronto and Ottawa in 1918, and Halifax and Regina in 1919. The women were usually involved in working with immigrants. The original motivation for a national conference came from Katherine Hughes and her Edmonton women. Katherine's sister, Loretta Kneil, an employee of the women's division of the Canadian Immigration Department here in Ottawa, noted "that Catholic Women were not being represented alongside other denominations in government consultation meetings concerning the settlement of post war immigrants because there was no appropriate organization" (*Catholic Women's League of Canada, 1990-2005, Companions on the Journey*, p. 3). Bellelle agreed and felt that an organization of "Catholic Women's Power" would have far reaching value to the cause of women in the broader Church. She also embraced what she called "Catholic Feminism" as a term to be used when setting a high moral standard and using clear judgement in deciding the best course of action for their families and themselves. The plans to "unite all Catholic Women in a bond of common fellowship for the promotion of religious and intellectual interest and social work; to foster among Catholics a right public opinion upon questions of the day; the betterment of Catholic action and racial harmony among Catholics" found favour with Apostolic Delegate Pietro di Maria (*Companions on the Journey*, p. 3).

During the first Montreal conference, June 16-18, 1920, Bellelle, flanked by Archbishop Neil McNeil of Toronto and Paul Bruchesi of Montreal, graciously welcomed 500 guests with a natural eloquence as she proclaimed, "we may be said to be laying the cornerstone of an edifice that will rise fair and beautiful, strong and proud before the eyes of the world. Shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart, let us go from this conference bound by a solidarity that nothing can break gentle women but brave solid, holding aloft our banner of patriotism to our beloved country and inviolable fidelity to our glorious faith" (*Companions on the Journey*, pp. 3-4).

With the establishment of The Canadian League magazine in 1921, a powerful platform to lift our voices in unison was realized. There are too many voices to include here but let me cherry pick a few for your consideration.

National President Evelyn Wyrzykowski (1988-1990) had a dream for her League sisters, "that they would help one another deepen their faith through spiritual formation, strengthen their bond of

unity through prayer and friendship, develop the practice of shared leadership, broaden their actions for timely issues and encourage each other to their place among us all for the glory of God" (*The Canadian League* magazine, Feb. 2, 1990). At the National Convention in 1990, National Spiritual Advisor Bishop James MacDonald (1988-1993) said that we must deepen our understanding of the concept of parish through study, prayer and reflection in order to experience our religion more fully with the parish as family and the League as sisterhood. Later at the national convention in 1994, National Spiritual Advisor Abbot Peter Novacosky (1993-1998) completes the community circle when he called the sisters to lives of unsurpassing holiness, in being attentive to the actions of the Holy Spirit among us. We have not failed these visionaries. There are so many examples of wonderful works of love and compassion that have emerged from the all-encompassing and holy mantle of our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. Here I would be honored to share with you a few of our real-life sisterhood in action stories.

Therese Dupuis is a more recently joined sister of our League at 90 years of age. Therese has been blind from Glaucoma for the past 30 years. Before being a former ministerial aid, Therese lacks not for enthusiasm in partaking all aspects of council life. She is known to have stood up and told jokes at a local convention – timing spot on. I remember her having the whole room in hysterics in the middle of the business session – we needed that uplift in the down draft of number crunching! Thanks Therese! I have a cherished memory I'd like to share about our sister. It was 2019, my first year as president, on the evening of our annual fundraiser named "A Celebration of St. Patrick." We had decided as a council not to charge an



entrance fee but to let the Holy Spirit lead the way instead. Therese was in the kitchen seated at the table chatting with me when Mary called over from the door saying, "Jean the hall is full and the guests are lined up to the parking lot!" We had set and cooked for 160 guests, so I turned quickly to Therese and took her hands in my own, saying, "Therese don't stop praying for the multiplication of our loaves until I tell you, okay?" She told me she was up to it. There began such a flurry of action to seat all the 200 attendees for the evening and feed a very friendly but hungry crowd. I kept peaking in on Therese to see how she was doing; she never opened her eyes for 90 minutes. May God be praised; her prayers fed the 5,000 with a few buckets left over! We all still laugh over God's providence that night and Therese who couldn't serve the stew but saved the night by her faith in heaven's providential care!

There are so many heartwarming and often hilarious stories of faith in action to share. Here's another that revolves around our Past President Jennifer Jones. Jennifer had an opportunity a few years back to bring into a council meeting a pair of self-defense experts from "Strong Orange." These presenters were very skilled. All of us women and yes, very senior women, became more aware of our surroundings in self-protection. Jen thought about the vulnerability of women at times and wanted to empower us with a mini workshop with these instructors. A wide range of ages were in attendance that evening plus a large number of guests from in and outside the parish. She had struck a chord! Well, in no time, these strong orange ladies had our sisters swinging their

canes, learning some fancy foot work and howling with laughter. We all learned that awareness of what was happening around you was the first key to self-defense. Thank you again, Jennifer!

There are still a thousand stories itching to be told, but these must wait for another day. As our foundress said, "let us stand shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart," so let us not forget that we sisters in the League are to reflect the highest ideals of holiness in our Catholic faith. With our heavenly Mother of Good Counsel's direction under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we journey on as a League into the next 100 years full of faith and confidence in "Service of God and Canada." We link arms and step out bright in high hope and resolution to make our sisterhood a place that women can come home to. So, what's my name again? It's sister to you all! God Bless!



REMEMBERING OUR PROVINCIAL THEME

