



CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE SOUTHERN AFRICA NEWSLETTER



Through the bonds of Peace

MARCH/APRIL 2024

#ISSUE 163



CHARITY, WORK AND LOYALTY IN ACTION



Members of the new CWL branch in Ballito, KZN.



CWL members from Holy Trinity, Durban, with Sr Vakashini.



Vrouebond lede van St Konrad, Dysselsdorp.



Polokwane CWL and the National Committee visiting the sisters at St Scholastica's Convent, Sekutu.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



How quickly 2023 seems to have passed, and here we are at the start of another new year. Thank you for all the news you have submitted. From your articles it seems that many of you were very busy in the runup to Christmas ensuring that those in need had a better Christmas than they would have anticipated. You truly are examples of living our motto.

How 2024 is going to turn out, here and in the wider world, is impossible to forecast. What seems certain though, is that it is likely to be a hard year for far too many people. Our continent is plagued by conflicts that are often disregarded by the rest of the world, bringing misery to all those innocents caught up in them. As we know, the wars in the Holy Land and Ukraine continue to exact a terrible toll, and at present it is hard to see an end in sight.

Here at home it is an election year, and we can expect temperatures to rise and tempers to be short. As women of faith it is our duty to be hopeful, and to spread a message of love, compassion and peace in our homes, in our workplaces, in our parishes and wherever we find ourselves. We are all God's children, irrespective of any outward differences. Our motto of "unity in the Spirit through the bonds of peace" could hardly be more apt. We who have the joyful promise of Easter Sunday must carry that certain hope to all we encounter.

Michaela

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The closing date for submission for articles for the next issue of the newsletter is the 22nd of May 2024.

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MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT



Thank you to all the diocese who have sent in their latest news reports. We can see by the lovely pictures of your charitable projects how hard you are working. Charity, Work and Loyalty are certainly in action. On a recent National visit to Polokwane, we visited a school where the CWL has taken on the task of repairing a classroom that has deteriorated and has not been used at all in recent years. The ladies are having one classroom repaired at a time. Education has got to be one of the most important aspects of our lives today. It is so encouraging to see the work being done. It is also good to read all about your projects and the work you are doing in keeping our CWL aims and objectives alive. Please continue to send pictures of your projects as we love to see all that is being done and what you are involved with.

Easter 2023 is almost upon us, and I trust that the period of Lent will be a special time of reflection and prayer; a time of sorrow, hope and happiness. Sorrow because we know the suffering our Lord Jesus endured for us. Jesus offered His life out of love for us and for His Father. His suffering had a purpose: our salvation. Hope because it is a time when we celebrate new beginnings and the promise of new life. The resurrection of Jesus Christ serves as a symbol of hope, reminding us that no matter how dark things may seem, there is always the possibility for redemption and renewal. Happiness because Jesus rose on the third day and saved us from our sins. Jesus gave us a clean slate to start anew. May Easter be a testimony to God's love and glory. May God shower us with blessings, love, and peace.

To you and your families, have a blessed Easter filled with happiness, love, and faith.

Yours in "unity in the Spirit, through the bonds of peace".

Anne

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN



The news in the world today is of bombings and conflicting interpretations of what happened; commentaries that favour one group over another; growing suspicions, doubts, contradictions. It all contributes to stoking anxiety, depression and violence.

Our humanity has previously endured times of hate, destruction and war. Bloody struggles motivated by religious beliefs, of my God against yours; fratricidal wars over politics, territory and exploitation of natural resources.

Faced with these realities, how should we react?

We all carry the voice of God within us. We can nourish it with the message of the Good News that invites us to see beyond the limits of a dark reality, where death does not have the final word.

The interior voice is our Teacher, whom we hear in the quietness of prayer, who offers us His presence and unconditional love, a love that allows us to accept ourselves, to heal our wounds and to serve; it's the voice that whispers to us: "Rise and go, you are My beloved daughter/son."

The love of God is one of the great realities of the universe, a pillar upon which the hope of the world rests. But it is a personal, intimate love too. He loves all people and also loves us individually, with a love that has no beginning and no end.

This love is more than a thing, it is God Himself, who delights in His people.

True Christian joy is the heart's response to the Lord's song of love.

Fr Kevin

COVER PICTURE

The picture on the cover of this edition of the newsletter is the "Madonna of the Swallow" by Italian artist Carlo Crivelli who painted it in the 1490s. It forms part of an altar piece commissioned by 2 members of the Ottoni family for their chapel in a Franciscan church in the small Italian town which they ruled. The swallow, which gives the painting its name, can be seen on the left-hand side of the painting, above Mary. Today we know about migrating birds which leave when the weather becomes cooler, returning again in spring. Back when the painting was created there was no such understanding, and the swallow which disappeared and then returned came to symbolize Christ's resurrection. The infant Christ on Mary's lap holds an apple, the symbol of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. The picture is rich in beautiful detail – Mary's robe, the fruits used as decoration, the detailed background. It could scarcely be more different from the reality of Mary's life as a young girl from a very humble background living in the Holy Land. St Jerome stands on the left of the picture, in the red robes. He holds the bibles that he translated into Latin. The model of the church on top of the bibles indicates his role as a Doctor of the Church. Next to him is a small lion; according to legend he removed a thorn from the paw of a lion, and after that the animal stayed with him for the rest of his life. The other figure standing next to the Madonna and child is St Sebastian. A soldier in the Roman army, he was martyred for his faith. Legend has it that he was tied to a post and arrows were shot at him (he carries an arrow in his hand). Left for dead, he was rescued by a widow. He was subsequently beaten to death on the order of Roman emperor Diocletian. The two saints in the painting are indicative of the interests of the patrons, one a churchman and the other a soldier, who commissioned the work. St Jerome is, among other things, the patron saint of biblical scholars and theologians, and St Sebastian is the patron saint of soldiers and archers. At the very bottom of the picture you can see part of the coat of arms of the Ottoni family. The entire coat of arms is visible on the full altarpiece.

NATIONAL VISIT TO POLOKWANE

At the beginning of November Anne, Susan, Pat and I travelled to Polokwane at the invitation of their diocesan executive. After meeting diocesan president Listrine, treasurer Frida and news correspondent Lerato at the cathedral, we sent off on the long trip into the heart of rural Limpopo to visit the small church at Nweli where Blessed Benedict Daswa is interred. En route we made a quick stop at the Tropic of Capricorn monument.

On arrival at the Church of the Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven which Bl Benedict had helped to build (before he built his own house), we were met by Fr John Kennedy and Sr Tshifhiwa Munzhedzi. Fr John celebrated Mass for our small group and afterwards Sr Tshifhiwa, who has been involved in promoting the sainthood cause of Bl Benedict Daswa since 2016, spoke to us about his life and death. Bishop-Emeritus Hugh Slattery, who had initiated the investigation into Benedict Daswa's cause for sainthood, paid a visit to the church while we were still there, with some of his family from Ireland, and spoke briefly to us. On our way back to Polokwane one of Benedict Daswa's friends drove in front of us, stopping at various sites associated with Bl Benedict and explaining the events that occurred there. All in all it was a very interesting and moving experience, one which we shall keep in our hearts. The following day we attended a short meeting at the cathedral with some CWL members from a few different branches. Afterwards we hit the road again, this time travelling to Motse Maria, a high school for girls that is 100 years old. It is now a state school on private property (in this case, owned by the Catholic church), and most of the girls are boarders. Quite a few of the CWL members who accompanied us on the trip had themselves attended school here. The principal of the school, herself an old girl, spoke to us briefly about the challenges the school faces and then we all had lunch together. One of the CWL projects is to repair and renovate some of the classrooms there which have fallen into a state of disrepair, and we were shown the work that is currently underway to do this. Then it was back into the cars as we set off to visit a community of elderly Benedictine sisters at Sekutu. The convent here is another of Polokwane CWL's projects, and the ladies donate groceries to the sisters there on a regular basis. We spent some time chatting to the sisters and enjoying the sandwiches they had generously prepared for us. We wandered around their vegetable garden and viewed their piggery, complete with very small piglets. Then it was time to head back to Polokwane for evening Mass at the cathedral. En route we made a detour via the ZCC (St Engenas) HQ, where we had an interesting conversation with their security guard who explained some matters regarding their enormous Easter gathering. After Mass we paid a short visit to Bishop Masela at his home, where we were all made to feel very welcome. That brought an end to our visit there and we flew back to Cape Town the next morning.

A very big thank you to the ladies of Polokwane CWL who welcomed us so warmly and whose hospitality was so generous. We wish you well in your endeavours of charity, work and loyalty. Listrine spent hours behind the wheel on our trip to Nweli, and our heartfelt thanks go to her. It was truly a weekend we will treasure.

Michaela Peart



The church at Nweli where Bl Benedict Daswa is interred.



The interior of the church at Nweli.



Heading to one of the classrooms at Motse Maria being renovated by the CWL.

WUCWO REPORT

The World Union of Catholic Women's Organisation - what a phenomenal organisation which has the interest of the globe at heart.

At the last conference in 2023 which took place in Assisi, Italy, and was attended by more than 700 women, WUCWO endorsed the World Women's Observatory which it had created in 2021 to give visibility to women, especially the most vulnerable whose sufferings and potential appear to be "invisible", in order to inspire and generate:

The pastoral strategies of the Catholic Church and religious bodies of other faiths

Synergies on the part of NGOs

Public policies of states

Contributions to the international agenda that favour the integral human development of women and their families, communities, and people.

In July 2023, I had the opportunity to attend a 3-day conference in Tanzania and was privileged to meet with women from different countries on the African continent, all with the same interest and the same focus of making a difference in the lives of others and being a voice to the voiceless.

At the conference each country was able to share the challenges and social ills faced in their communities and how they deal with them. The most burning and challenging issues were abuse of women and children, gender-based violence and human trafficking, challenges faced by all too many South Africans as well. Much deliberation took place on these issues. There is great need for government intervention to protect women and children, not forgetting those men too who are abused.

Thus, the plea from WUCWO on behalf of the World Women's Observatory is for ALL to be ambassadors to help combat the struggles and social problems faced by women and children.

WUCWO events due to be held in the first half of this year:

School for Synodality on the 27th of February, with 3 days of webinars, organised through the Women's World Observatory.

Each webinar had different panellists. The Synthesis document of the first phase of the Synodal Assembly was to be analysed, and some of the participants, including bishops, religious and lay women, were to share their experiences and their points of view on some of the proposals and questions in chapter 9 of the Synthesis, "Women in the Life and Mission of the Church".

International Women's Day on the 5th of March: As has been the case for the past few years, this was going to be done in collaboration with the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue. An online conference was to be held with the participants being women of faith drawn from the main religions of the world (Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish and those from an Ecumenical perspective). The meeting was titled "Women Sowing Seeds of Peace and Cultivating Encounter", and its aim was to establish how women, each with their own reality, culture, faith and mission, can contribute to developing the relationships of justice and peace so desperately needed in today's world.

A board meeting will be held in Rome in May.

Veronica Malan-Lebona

ARCHDIOCESE OF BLOEMFONTEIN

The Bloemfontein archdiocese held its AGM on the 7th of October at St Charles Lwanga Catholic church in Botshabelo. The meeting started off with a celebration of holy Mass by Fr. Thabo Kenke, archdiocesan chaplain. In addition to the reports presented by branch presidents, there were a few items up for discussion. The diocesan president's report included suggestions on how to improve our way of doing things. Fr. Kenke's report highlighted matters that need to be considered following his appointment as chaplain in March 2023. These included challenges he had picked up within the League, and he gave advice on how to deal with them. Branches were requested to contribute non-perishable foodstuffs at the AGM to make food parcels for distribution to the less privileged identified by the different branches. Although this initiative was not very well supported, food parcels were made up and donated for the Christmas season.

The archdiocesan committee held a closing function on the 25th of November for the Bloemfontein branches. Unfortunately the "pool party" held at the Oblates House in Dan Pienaar was not well attended, and only about 15 ladies, including the executive committee members, were present. We had the honour of our chaplain's presence as well as some other priests.

We opened 2024 with a memorial Mass on the 27th of January to remember our sisters lost to Covid 19. Mass was celebrated in their honour and to celebrate their lives, and their family members were invited to attend. The following ladies were remembered from different branches: Sacred Heart Cathedral: Me. Mampai, Me Celestine Brummage and Dr. Sarah Yiga; St Mark Catholic Church: Me Montsheng Celestina Khalaki; St Rose of Lima Catholic Church: Me. Khethiwe Angie Rapitsi. These ladies had dedicated their time to the League and lived out the League's motto of charity, work and loyalty.

ARCHDIOCESE OF BLOEMFONTEIN

ST MARK



whenever there is an event, and also cleans at the church every Saturday. Charity brings us together as church members who care about each other and make a difference to other people's lives. After working hard as members for the year of 2023 we had a closing party on the 9th of December at Centenary lodge.

ST ROSE OF LIMA

One of the ladies from St Rose of Lima was identified to receive a food parcel for Christmas from the diocesan executive committee. Our president had the honour of delivering the gift to Me Mancho Khumisi and made her smile with happiness. Every year CWL members "spoil" their priests. Our parish priests are our first chaplains and we were pleased to give our parish priest, Fr Thabo Mmolaoa OMI, a gift for the festive season.

In 2021 we had pledged funds to buy curtains for Mission House. We have managed to honour part of the pledge, and until such time as we can pay the balance we have lent some curtains to Fr Ramakatsa to use. We hope to have paid in full by the end of April.

Priesthood Sunday is a special day set aside to honour the priesthood, a day to reflect upon and affirm the role of priests in the life of the church. Traditionally scheduled for the fourth Sunday of October, we only celebrated it on the 3rd of December due to other commitments. To mark the occasion we gave Fr Ramakatsa a voucher.

On the 17 December we were able to help Me Ikaneng Maila (Kemolo) who sells sacramentals for the church. Unemployed, she works very hard to provide for her children. She is always willing to help at the church

ARCHDIOCESE OF CAPE TOWN

DIOCESAN



children who are confined to the hospital over Christmas to experience some festive cheer, said one of the organisers, Dr Jana Hoole. Kate Christie Wade, founder of The Friends of KDH, a non-profit organisation that supports the Khayelitsha hospital, said they had appealed to donors to support the Christmas party. The Catholic Women's League donated more than 100 knitted teddy bears in response to this appeal. Hospital nurse Ntsikelelo Manono said the day was a way for the hospital to show its young patients that it cared about them.

ATLANTIS

The ladies from CWL Atlantis gave food to the people in Blikkiesdorp on the West Coast Road near Atlantis on the 20th of October.

BELHAR

The ladies of CWL surprised their priest, Father Anthony Obadina, with a gift on Priesthood Sunday.

BISHOP LAVIS

Bishop Lavis enrolled 7 new members and 5 old members renewed their commitment at Mass on the 29th of October. Present were diocesan president Rebecca Weir and national president Anne Deary.

We had our end of year thanksgiving Mass at the Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Bothasig, on Saturday the 11th of November. It was followed by a lunch hosted by Bothasig branch. The celebrants were our diocesan chaplain Fr Nkululeko and Bothasig parish priest, Fr Ivanhoe. The branches were well represented, and the ladies had a wonderful time. A huge thank you to Bothasig for hosting the lunch.

Pictured are the diocesan exco members.

Doctors and nurses from Khayelitsha District Hospital's paediatric department held a Christmas party for their young patients. One hundred children were served lunch and received party packs, toys and knitted teddies during the party, to which staff had contributed. The annual event was a chance for

ARCHDIOCESE OF CAPE TOWN

BOTHASIG



The final Good Shepherd Parish's 50th Jubilee celebration was a seniors' lunch held in our hall on Saturday the 20th of October. Thank you to all the CWL ladies who worked so hard to make the event the success that it was. Special thanks to our men's group for providing lifts, to the youth members who assisted us, and to our chefs Paula and Maria.

Congratulations to our member Joan, who celebrated her 90th birthday. Thank you for all your hard work for our branch over so many years. May you continue to be blessed for many years to come.

GOODWOOD



Goodwood CWL ladies dropped off Christmas gifts and some household necessities for 9 foster children at Malachi House in Richwood on the 8th of December.

Every year parishioners are asked to donate food items for Christmas parcels, and this year our members, together with parishioners and the community engagement team, packed 101 food parcels. Thank you to everyone who contributed towards this initiative.

We provided stationery to 20 underprivileged children at a local school. It was received with much appreciation.

Grateful thanks were received from the staff at Acacia Park primary for fillings for sandwiches provided by our branch for underprivileged school children.

ELSIES RIVER

St Clare's Elsie's River celebrated Priesthood Sunday at the 8am Mass on Sunday the 29th of October. It was a very special occasion, our first time ever celebrating it, and Fr Sanish is still new to the parish which made it special for him as well. All the ladies were involved in the liturgy. After giving him a gift, they asked the parishioners to stand and extend their hands towards him while saying the prayer for priests. We asked Deacon Arulandu to give him a special blessing. Father Sanish appreciated the gesture very much, especially the prayer and the blessing.

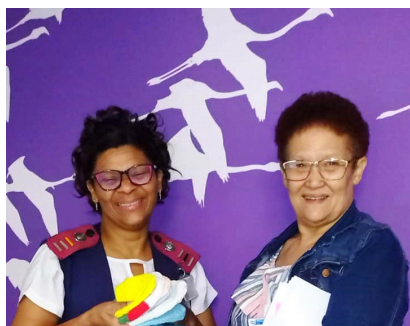
KHAYELITSHA



The Khayelitsha branch marked the celebration of Priesthood Sunday by praying for their parish priest, Fr. Nkululeko Meyiwa, and expressing their appreciation with a gift.

On December the 3rd we went to Masigcine on a special mission. We organized a Christmas party for the shelter, and the ladies also provided lunch. This brought immense joy to them, and they were most grateful. It was not just about buying clothes; our goal was to bring happiness to the children and create a meaningful festive season for everyone.

KUILSRIVER



The ladies from CWL Kuilsriver renewed their commitment at the 8am Mass on Sunday the 17th of September.

Maria of CW Kuilsriver handed over baby beanies, knitted by the CWL members, to Sr Swart for the new neonatal ICU at Groote Schuur Hospital. They donated baby beanies and booties to Groote Schuur and Tygerberg Hospital on Premie Day.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CAPE TOWN

MACASSAR



Deacon Allen led the Rosary Rally at Macassar and the CWL ladies were in attendance.

On the 21st of January, St Stephen's Macassar celebrated the 40th anniversary of their church. It was also Fr John's 80th birthday. After the celebration lunch was served to the clergy.

PAROW

The CWL Parow ladies wrapped Christmas gifts for their own needy parish children.

PLUMSTEAD



Our CWL was invited to CHOC House Plumstead's birthday on the 25th of October. They were our chosen charity when we first formed as a branch. We continue to support them with a monthly Pick n Pay voucher to help them purchase necessary items.

This year we again donated stationery items to St Anthony's Primary School in Heathfield.

RETREAT

We celebrated Priesthood Sunday with our priest, Father Peter, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Retreat. Gifts were given to both our priests, Fr Peter and Fr Cecil, and to Deacon Prince.

ROCKLANDS



On the 15th of December our members went to a children's safehouse in our area. We organized a light lunch for the children, and the ladies also got each child a Santa shoebox. This brought immense joy to them, and they were very grateful. Our goal was to bring happiness to the children and to spend some time getting to know them and show true Christmas love.

RONDEBOSCH



Our lovely ladies made up a beautiful hamper for our priests for Priesthood Sunday.

On the 1st of February we attended Mass to celebrate Norma Edward's 90th birthday. Fr Chiedza said a beautiful Mass celebrating Norma's long association with the parish and the League. He ended the Mass asking us all to join him in blessing Norma and then the congregation sang Happy Birthday to her. A very special occasion indeed.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CAPE TOWN

STEENBERG

Sarah Naidoo from CWL Steenberg knitted beautiful jumpers to donate to the Clothing Guild in October.

TABLE VIEW



The ladies from the CWL Table View evening group donated teddies, toys for the children's wing playroom and beanies and booties to the Khayelitsha hospital. The teddies were given to the children at Christmas time. Thanks to Alice from the morning group for your teddies.

The evening group packed Christmas boxes for the men and ladies at the Eric Miles Cheshire Home in Milnerton. Christmas will definitely be a lot brighter for residents with the beautiful and delicious treats in the boxes.

The evening group was blessed to enrol 2 new members, Suzan Ndagire and Natalie Petersen, at Mass on Saturday evening the 18th of November. May God bless them abundantly in their work with CWL.

The evening group started off the year with a breakfast at Salt & Sage in Table View. Delicious food and wonderful company set us up for a year of hard work on our various projects.

The morning group donated R4000.00 worth of toiletries and groceries to TLC in Table View. The items will be used for the homeless in our community. We got together for a Christmas party in the beautiful garden of one of our members. Lots of laughs and fun were had by all, a lovely end to a year of hard work.

DIOCESE OF DE AAR



De Aar's diocesan AGM was held on the 1st of October at St John's Mission in De Aar. Members from Colesberg and Middelburg were also in attendance.

Middelburg presented their report for the previous year. They visited the sick every Wednesday and attended prayer meetings at different churches every 2nd Sunday. In December they took food parcels to the old age homes of various churches. At month's end they had prayed for the youth, for those who are ill and for families. They feel that younger people need to take the lead in CWL now, and they will be happy to advise them.

Colesburg now has only 3 members. Although they are not able to do much, they help out where possible. This includes preparing the altar for mass on Wednesdays and Fridays, donating money towards electricity and groceries and doing Scripture readings. Although they are not in a strong financial position, they were able to contribute funds towards the tea on Diocesan day.

Fr Paul addressed the meeting and expressed his gratitude for what is done in the parishes. He said how important it is to follow Jesus and his teachings, and to live your life as an example to others. He encouraged the ladies not to give up when things got difficult, but to smile and believe tomorrow will be better. They should discuss their problems and find solutions. It is important to speak to our children and help them in life.

De Aar branch has now handed over leadership of the CWL in the De Aar diocese to Middelburg.

ARCHDIOCESE OF DURBAN

DIOCESAN

Greetings from the Durban Diocesan Executive Committee. As we enter 2024, we wish each member of CWL good health, happiness and passion to serve the League according to our motto of charity, work and loyalty. We are ever grateful to the members of our branches for all they do, and especially for their support of, and donations to, the various charities they support. Members were disappointed to receive the news that Conference 2024 will be restricted to just 400 attendees. What a difficult task this is for the National Committee. We wish them God's richest blessings and send grateful thanks as they organise and prepare for the Conference. Exciting times ahead.

As we rounded off 2023, many branches hosted successful and enjoyable parties and gatherings for children, the elderly and the impoverished. Branches donated generously towards 'Thank You' hampers for the caretakers of Pinetown parish, the home of Durban Diocesan. The Caring Fund donated food, clothing, and school items to those in need. The executive committee enjoyed an informal Christmas Bring and Share lunch after our last meeting. Fr Sifiso, our Spiritual Director, was gifted with a huge "sweetie jar" filled with his favourite delights.

May the joy of the newborn Jesus fill our hearts and guide us into this new year.

On Sunday the 21st of January, the executive committee made a very early start and travelled to Ballito for the opening of a new branch. The executive team had offered support, visits, workshops and training in the formation of this new branch over the past months. Under the capable and experienced leadership of new president Zee Cele, they are now a fully-fledged branch of Durban Diocesan. Karena, who is our national secretary and now resides in Ballito, had helped prepare a lovely programme. Diocesan president Linda Melson inducted the new members. All members present renewed their commitment to the League and heartfelt congratulations were extended to all. Fr Stephen Tulley, Ballito's parish priest, spoke highly of CWL. With his support, this small but dynamic Ballito branch is going to go from strength to strength. The ladies of Ballito prepared a delicious High Tea which was enjoyed by all. Fr Stephen was seen encouraging visitors to join CWL if they were not already members.

We are delighted to have a new branch in Durban Diocesan.

ALL SAINTS, BALLITO

A formal induction ceremony was held at All Saints Catholic Church in Ballito on the 21st of January to welcome the first founding members of the new CWL branch. The ceremony, presided over by Fr Stephen Tully, was followed by the cutting of a cake to symbolise the "birthday" of the new branch.

Diocesan president Linda, and national secretary Karena attended the event and helped to pin CWL membership badges, blessed by Fr Stephen, on the ladies' lapels.

"The new All Saints Ballito branch is honoured and humbled by the overwhelming support received from the diocesan executive throughout our formation stage" said Zee Cele, local CWL President.

"We would also like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to the CWL sisters from Stanger, Tongaat, Clermont, Pinetown and Woodlands, who came to support us", she said

ST MARY, PIETERMARITZBURG



As 2023 drew to a close, the CWL ladies from St Mary's were extremely busy. The residents of the NCVF Home for the Elderly were entertained and spoilt with delicious eats, a simple gesture but thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated by all.

The Open Gate School for Special Needs Children was given a donation of 24 dozen rolls for their end of year party.

A morning was spent wrapping boxes for the Santa Shoe Box project where gifts are given to children in need. A lovely morning of chatting, laughing, coffee and of course wrapping took place.

A number of our ladies diligently get involved week after week with the soup kitchen where up to 70 homeless men and women are fed. Just before Christmas they received their meal as well as crumpets, scones, muffins and packets

of crisps. It makes our task all worthwhile when you hear them say "thank you and God bless you ma'am".

The year ended with our annual priests' Christmas lunch for the Pietermaritzburg and Vulindhlela Deanery. Unfortunately, only 8 priests out of 20 were able to attend. Nonetheless the three-course meal provided by our ladies was thoroughly enjoyed and greatly appreciated by the visitors. Nothing went to waste as the 14 ladies involved turned it into a Christmas lunch for themselves. After all their hard work this was truly deserved.

We will endeavour to continue our work in 2024, living up to our motto and helping those in need.

ARCHDIOCESE OF DURBAN

HOLY TRINITY



Pictured: Miss Thembelihle Dlamini, the principal at St Vincent Child and Youth Care Centre, with the stationery items.

The Holy Trinity CWL branch closed the year on a high note, achieving remarkable milestones in charity, work and loyalty. On the 4th of November we held our annual general meeting (AGM). All the office bearers remain the same except for news correspondent Sybil Hamilton, who at the age of 88 had taken on this role and utilized her phenomenal writing skills. We will dearly miss her contributions on the committee. The position has been filled by Vimbai Vakisai. Our branch visited the Sisters of Charity in Shallcross on the 25th of November, making a generous donation of nappies, toiletries, and cleaning materials. Sr Vakashini, along with seven other Sisters, runs the facility which helps 24 female and 21 male patients. They are supported by 14 carers. The CWL members were given a tour of the spotless facility, admiring the dedication and commitment of the Sisters. As part of our commitment to our parish community, we organized an Advent Candle selling project under the guidance of Rosalie Donachie. It was very successful, and all proceeds went to the parish. Demonstrating our warm hospitality, we joined the Holy Trinity Hospitality Team to host a Seniors' Tea on the 2nd of December. The event saw an excellent turnout and our ladies actively participated in the event, assisting

with the serving of tea and eats. We organized our annual Christmas Hamper Raffle in December. Our members enthusiastically contributed prizes, resulting in three large hampers being assembled. The raffle ticket sales generated significant funds, and we extend our gratitude to Holy Trinity Parish for their unwavering support.

As a fitting conclusion to a busy yet successful year, we held a Christmas-themed meeting on the 9th of December.

In January we joined hands with the parish to generously contribute a diverse selection of stationery items to the St. Vincent Child and Youth Centre in Mariannhill.

We are looking ahead to a promising 2024 as we gear up for preparations for Shrove Tuesday and the Paschal meal.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA, DURBAN NORTH

2023 was truly a wonderful year for our Durban North branch. We pushed through the days, met deadlines, chased projects, and appreciated the gift of being able to help others in need.

On the 29th of September we handed over four walkers to Cansa clinic and one to Sabon House, a home for retired priests. Fatima parish held a Ministries' Fair on the 8th of October at all three masses. Nine ladies showed interest in the CWL and 3 attended our meeting in October.

The month of October was Cuppa for Cansa. Our generous parishioners contributed to the total of R4570.00 which we deposited into Cansa's Durban account. For a second year we distributed sanitary pads and beanies to women at the Cato Manor/Chesterville transit camp.

On the 15th of November we prepared 40 hampers full of lovely items for moms and babies at the King Dinizulu Hospital. The children in long stay at the TB ward there were treated by us to a Christmas party and Christmas gifts. This too is an annual project. So much joy is seen in these children while we feed them, paint their faces and hand out their gifts. On the same day, after the party, we proceeded to the maternity ward to hand out 40 hampers to the mums in the Kangaroo ward and maternity ward. There too we received much love, joy and appreciation from the mums. We have a team of ladies who help with funeral teas, a service we offer to parishioners. Donations received are put to good use towards future projects.

We hosted an Advent wreath-making workshop on the 30th of November. It was a fun evening, with 21 parishioners attending, and mince pies and teas/coffee were served. Father Justin blessed our wreaths on completion. Once again we placed our CWL Christmas nativity set in the Durban North library for the duration of the Christmas season. Two Christmas hampers were raffled and as always, our generous parishioners made it possible to increase our monetary savings for charity work to help others in need. A delicious sit-down meal including puddings was prepared for 8 priests at our parish Penitential service on Thursday the 14th of November. We continue to collect bottle caps and bread tags for wheelchairs. Recently we handed over a new wheelchair to a 90-year-old lady who is very frail. We have three Dominican sisters at our parish, and we gave them a Christmas hamper to enjoy over the festive season. We always treat our parish priest Fr Justin to gifts on his birthday, ordination anniversary and for Christmas. Our Christmas lunch, a cordon bleu affair prepared by some of our members, was held on the 9th of December. We are looking forward to another wonderful year doing small things of charity with great love.

WOODLANDS



One of the communities we have been supporting over many years is Jabulani and with the closure of The Jabulani Centre, which was run by Sister Marco, we decided to continue our support as the community is in dire need of assistance. It currently falls under the auspices of Sister Bernadette and the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Mariannhill. Recently 10 bags of assorted clothing items and crockery were delivered to Sister Clare and two nuns from the Sisters of the Precious Blood, by Mazoo Mhlongo, Thoko Dlungele and our president Clementia Gambushe. Sister Bernadette explained that they not only cater for Jabulani but Ixopo, Richmond and other areas as well

Pictured: Sr Clare, centre, and Clementia Gambushe, far left.

ARCHDIOCESE OF DURBAN

ST FRANCIS XAVIER, THE BLUFF



On Saturday the 2nd of December we hosted our Mini Market in the hall and parking lot of our parish. Tables were sold to parish members as well as to members of the community. Much fun was had by everyone.

Journey of Hope, our project for 2024, also made an appearance. It was good to see the children happy in their environment and we wish them all happiness.

On the following Saturday our branch had its Christmas lunch at the Bluff Golf Club. Among our honoured guests were our parish priest Fr Mike Fowley, DC Malcolm Wright and his wife Sharon Wright (who is a member of CWL), DC Carl Emmanuel and his wife Charmaine, Br Francois and our seminarian Br Patrick Regnard.

We look forward to another fruitful year.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



We held a 3-day jumble sale at the end of September and early October and raised a good amount. The ladies worked in teams to set up, sell and pack away.

The Cuppa for Cansa was on the 22nd of October. We had to move it to the hall due to bad weather. Although attendance was not great, those who were there enjoyed the morning and gave generously. Monies raised were donated to CHOC.

We celebrated Priesthood Sunday by presenting a gift to our parish priest during Mass and then having lunch at a restaurant.

In November we visited the Sisters of Charity in Shallcross with donations of food items and clothing. What a humbling experience it was. The Sisters

welcomed us proudly and showed us around their home. The residents sang for us, and we prayed in the chapel. Each of us left with a beautiful Lady of Mercy medal. The Sisters rely entirely on donations and our contributions were gratefully received. Our members contributed most generously to the Christmas goodie bags which were distributed to the ladies at the Place of Safety Pinetown Crisis Centre. They opened them on Christmas Day and were delighted with their spoils.

We made donations to St Philomena's, St Theresa's Home and Cheshire Homes.

Our branch Christmas took place on the 2nd of December, and we were joined by Fr Sifiso and Sandile, a visiting seminarian.

Our Christmas hamper was well supported by parishioners and our members and was won by Dina Ndlovu from our branch.

Our parish Tuesday feeding scheme, run by our member Nomusa Zulu, hosted a wonderful Christmas Party for approximately 300 underprivileged people on Saturday the 16th of December. Donations received from parishioners and family members enabled us to serve a hot meal and dessert, with each person going home with a food parcel. Our branch also donated treat packs for the children. Our ladies were joined by parishioners, and all worked tirelessly to ensure the day was a success. We are forever grateful to Nomusa for all her hard work in this ministry.

ARCHDIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG

DIOCESAN



Johannesburg Diocesan Council's final meeting of the year ended with a Mass concelebrated by outgoing diocesan chaplain Fr Vincent Pienaar, South West regional chaplain Fr Bafana Ndlovu and West Rand regional chaplain Fr Shiya. It was followed by a Christmas lunch.

ARCHDIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG

JOHANNESBURG REGIONAL COUNCIL



T - Thoughtful

H - Humble

A - Animated (Lots of Laughter)

B - Brainy (No notes – exceptional memory)

O – Own Way of Conveying Messages

JRC President Regina Poore welcomed the ladies to a morning of reflection in September at the tranquil shrine of Schoenstatt. The theme was “Discipleship”, and the reflection was conducted by Fr Thabo Mothiba OMI of St Benedict’s College.

Fr Thabo gave members a brief overview of his priesthood following his ordination in 2015. Since 2016 he has specialised in education at St Benedict’s. Previously he had been based in the West Rand at Kagiso. He says he is a happy priest. Discipleship: the disciples Jesus called were transformed. Fr Thabo teaches Grade Two boys, where he tells them of the “Business of God” with millions of people asking for prayers to be answered. The Holy Spirit takes them to God and “first come, first served”, with the angels ever present. Fr Thabo spoke about some of those who were called: Moses, Jeremiah, David, Paul, the Virgin Mary.

At the break, Father heard confessions and members spent quiet time in the Schoenstatt chapel and gardens. Using the story of the sinful woman washing Jesus’ feet with her tears, (Luke 7: 36-47), Fr Thabo spoke in depth of forgiveness. He concluded that God is asking us to be his disciples.

In thanking Father Thabo for a thoughtful and insightful morning, diocesan news correspondent Ida Steyn used his initials to describe him and the morning:

ELDORADO PARK / ENNERDALE



The CWL ladies from Eldorado Park and Ennerdale spent a day cleaning and weeding Catholic priests’ graves

EDENVALE



CWL Edenvale branch was blessed to enroll 10 new members and present Sherine with her 10-year badge at Sunday Mass.

On Saturday the 18th of November we hosted the tea garden at the Little Eden fete. Ladies volunteered their time and baking skills to assist in raising funds for the Society. On the 6th of December our ladies enjoyed a Christmas lunch - a great turnout and lots of fun!

ST HUBERT, ALEXANDRIA



The new CWL branch at St Hubert’s in Alexandria was launched on Sunday the 22nd of October. 8 CWL branches were represented at the mass - Bryanston, Rosebank, Rivonia, Maryvale, Meadowlands, Molapo, Victory Park, Eldorado Park.

In a moving ceremony, the branch received their branch flag and enrolled 18 members, and 2 members who were previously members at other parishes renewed their commitment to the League.

The branch remembered Daisy Maimela, who had passed away, in a very special way during the ceremony, executed touchingly by the Regional President. The momentous occasion concluded with a delicious lunch in a beautifully decorated hall.

Thank you to St Hubert’s parish for their hospitality and to all CWL members who have supported St. Hubert’s on the way to becoming a branch.

A special thank you to the parish priest, Father Paul for his unwavering support over the past year.

Congratulations to the ladies who were enrolled, and may the Lord continue to guide your path and strengthen your commitment.

ARCHDIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG

MARYVALE



Our Lady of the Wayside Maryvale Church held an exhibition, promotion and recruitment Sunday on the 29th of October 2023. It was a windy day but despite the weather we went all out to showcase our organisation to the fullest and managed to get some women interested in joining the CWL in the new year. It was a wonderful morning spent with our fellow parishioners, deacon and priest. When explaining what CWL was all about to the interested parishioners who visited our presentation table, we were also reminded of why we joined the CWL and what CWL is all about.

On the 11th of November we hosted a fundraising high tea with a twist, one of its kind. This was no ordinary high tea...a high tea of the 80s and beyond, and gents were invited to attend the high tea. It was a great success, with wonderful and vibrant guest speakers. A lot of work was put into making the event a success. Our CWL sisters from other parishes came in their numbers to support the event. Everything from the photo booth to the decor and food was on point. The dress codes were a remembrance of the 80s and beyond, and the styles were fabulous.

We had young traditional dancers and poets who gave us a hint of what they thought of the 80s and beyond. A lot of prizes were up for grabs and an auction of vintage items sealed the deal.

We visited Nazareth House on the 2nd of December with a delivery of early Christmas gifts. The shelter needs Pampers and toiletries amongst other items, and this year we decided to visit them with our contribution. It was a morning well spent after the monthly soup kitchen held at our Maryvale parish.

On Sunday the 31st of December the CWL of Maryvale joined the rest of the parishioners to bid farewell to Father Tony Nunes. He will be greatly missed by the parishioners as well as by the CWL. He was always there to bless our events as well as to assist us in encouraging the parishioners to support our fundraising events and to be generous.

Thank you, Father Tony Nunes, you will be missed by the CWL of Maryvale and we wish you all the best.

VICTORY PARK



On Tuesday the 28th of November the Tuesday and Saturday CWL groups held a seniors' Christmas lunch in the church hall. It was preceded by holy Mass in the church. Approximately 120 seniors attended, and we were pleased that quite a few of the senior men were there. Fathers Tony and Emmanuel graced our occasion. The entertainment was by two ladies. Dessert was served as well as cool drinks and wine. The seniors complimented the League on the décor and the delicious lunch. The Tuesday group held a Christmas lunch and Secret Santa function for their members. The Tuesday group continues to pray the Rosary, and the Rosary Emblem rotates among different CWL groups in the diocese.

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL COUNCIL

ST ANGELA, DOBSONVILLE



On the 18th of November, the South West Rand Region hosted Mass for deceased members at St. Angela Church in Dobsonville. Families of the deceased were invited to the commemoration Mass which was celebrated by the regional Spiritual Director Fr Petros Shiya and St Angela's parish priest Fr. Monwabisi Ntshudu. An extract from the regional president's message to the families was, "The love of those we held dear to us is a source of strength and fond memories. May those memories give you peace and comfort."

We arranged a Christmas lunch and goodies for 50 elders on the 10th of December. We also provided 100 party packs for children.

Additionally, we provided toiletries to boys and girls in the parish.

ST. MARTIN, ORLANDO WEST

On the 25th of November we enrolled two members in the League, Bafikile Mbatha and Nonhlanhla Huntley. A ten-year service badge was awarded to Martha Phakedi, and Queen Radebe received blessings for recommitting to the League.

Our members contributed towards revamping the Grotto. The project involved cutting trees around the Grotto, fencing, painting, and decorating. This initiative was presented to the church as thanksgiving during the enrolments. Father Munevani blessed the new Grotto.

ARCHDIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG

ST JOSEPH

Our branch donated food parcels to the Ithemba Foundation in Soweto, which assists youth recovering from drug addiction. It is in giving that we shall receive. The end of substance abuse treatment is just the start of the road to recovery. Those in rehab need help and support to get to recovery. Keeping the lines of communication open, being supportive and showing love for recovering addicts can make a tremendous difference in their recovery journey. This is what the St Joseph CWL did to support the youth from Ithemba Foundation. The activity was done to wrap up the month of the Assumption of Our Lady.

These are some of the messages we received from the young people at Ithemba:

"After the passing of my grandmother I stopped going to church. It's been 10 years since I've been to church. She was the only one who made me go to church and believe in God. The 20th of August 2023 was a new day in my life because I started believing in God again. I would love to go to church every Sunday. I was happy for the first [time] after 10 years. I would love to say to everyone in church, 'I am happy. I find God in my life again. Can I come every Sunday?'" from Kamogelo Scheepers. "I had a lovely day at Saint Joseph Church. I enjoyed how the youth choir sang, wonderful. I liked everything about St Joseph, it's nice.

The wonderful thing is Holy Communion. I like the way the women of prayers treated us, I appreciate a lot. I would like to attend on Sundays, thank you." from Njabulo Cebekhulu.

"Yes, I have to accept I for one had a great time, I was blown away by the choir, it felt like I was already in heaven. The treatment that I and my fellow brothers got was so warm and very much welcoming, I feel I was spiritually moved to another level. I felt like going back because it showed there are people who really care about recovering addicts." From Nkateko Manganye.

We are pleased we could make a difference in the lives of these young men.

ST MARGARET



Our branch celebrated its 30-year anniversary on the 28th of October. Seven members achieved 30 years of membership in the League, and there were also new enrolments. Fr Sithole mentioned that the day was extra special as it was the feast of two apostles, Simon and Jude. Members gave Fr Sithole and the parish gifts of appreciation. Lunch was served and enjoyed by all.

DIOCESE OF KIMBERLEY

KIMBERLEY DEANERY

ST MARY

After a year filled with the hustle and bustle of some really challenging entrepreneurial pursuits, we decided to hold one final fundraising activity before taking a break at the end of the year. The second day of December had every member moving up and down making preparations for a day that would effectively squeeze in as much hard work as possible, while simultaneously including an equal measure of play to compensate for the toil. The modest concept of this fundraising event called for each member to invite a friend and sell homemade rooster koek and gemmer to all the other members and their guests. Despite everyone being baffled by the idea of the rooster koek and gemmer combination these flew off the shelves like hot cakes.

The best part of the day, which was filled with music and dance, saw the attendees participating in nostalgic childhood games. "Red and Green" had everyone up and moving, halting on command and in stitches as all present embraced their inner child and let loose from the stresses which all too often punctuate adult reality. Martina was crowned the overall winner, though consensus declared every participant a true winner. Much appreciation goes to Didi for providing the venue and Tshidax for the provision of the refreshing cocktails and mocktails which saw no one going thirsty. And thanks go to those who provided eats and arranged the décor. Thank you to all who were present for the wonderful energy brought to the event and the fabulous team spirit they demonstrated.

ST PETER THE APOSTLE



We celebrated Priesthood Sunday with parish priest Fr NJ Matlheng on the 20th of November. Together with the parishioners we prayed for him, and he was presented with a gift by Ms Angela Noosi.

The ladies participated in this year's Cancer Awareness campaign by buying bras which were presented to Dr Osei Fofie and his staff at the Robert Sobukwe hospital on the 12th of December. This year our parish priest Fr Matlheng will visit the hospital to pray with them, a request they made to us.

Four of our ladies received their 10-year badges, and afterwards a scrumptious meal was served in celebration.

Our Christmas project this year was the provision of Christmas hampers to 20 families, and it was heart-warming to see their smiles of delight.

DIOCESE OF KIMBERLEY

ST CHARLES LWANGA

On Sunday the 23rd of July 2023, 4 of our ladies went to Jagersfontein after Mass. It is in the Free State, 165km from Kimberley. The purpose of the visit was to fulfil the "charity" part of our motto.

A terrible disaster befell this community which is sustained by the diamond mines in the area. On the 11th of September 2022 a mine dam wall burst and overwhelmed the area. Many houses were destroyed by the muddy floodwaters and 3 people lost their lives. Two bodies were recovered but to date one remains missing.



Ms Kale, the principal of St Lawrence's Primary School met us on arrival. She contacted Fr Mapulanga of Kriste Morena parish as well as other members of the community, and she took us on a walkabout of the affected area. Afterwards we offloaded the boxes of supplies we had brought with us at the school. Following a short prayer with Fr Mapulanga, Ms Sefali (one of the teachers) and some community members, we explained the reason for our visit which we had co-ordinated through the Bloemfontein CWL archdiocesan president and Ms Kale. A member of the PPC thanked us on behalf of the Jagersfontein community. A committee had been formed to take responsibility for the distribution of donated items, ensuring that they reached those in need.

During our time there, the principal took us to visit a family affected by the disaster, whose children attended St Lawrence Primary. It was heart-breaking to see the 4 children, aged from 9 months to 9 years, sitting without warm clothes or shoes in a house open to the elements. We discussed possible interventions for the family. We cannot save the world, but we made a difference with this small step taken.

TAUNG DEANERY

ST LEO

On the 24th of December we donated groceries for the priests. They were received and blessed by Fr Sipho Moatlhodi, the district priest.

DIOCESE OF OUDTSHOORN

ST KONRAD, DYSELSDORP



Op 19 Desember 2023 het St Konraad parogie hul jaarlikse Kersete vir hulle bejaardes gehou. Die dag het begin met 'n heerlike ontbyt van broodjies, muffins, tee, koffie en sap voorsien deur die Vrouebond. Almal het lekker saam gekuier. Daar was geleentheid vir Hl Bieg gevolg deur Heilige Mis. 'n Heerlike maaltyd is bedien en elke bejaarde het 'n geskenk ontvang. Die siekes en huisgebondes is tuis bedien. Dit was 'n aangename geleentheid.

STS PETER & PAUL, GEORGE

On the 9th of December we paid an early Christmas visit to Phambili Shelter where we delighted the mothers and children with individual gifts and sweets.

On the 17th of December we combined with our parish Family Life group to spoil our priest, Fr Edward, on the anniversary of his priestly ordination. A delicious tea was served.

DIOCESE OF POLOKWANE



We thank God for the new year, graces and blessings of health and life. Towards the end of 2023 we had the honour and privilege of welcoming our national office executive to Polokwane. Among the executive members were Anne (president), Pat (deputy president), Susan (treasurer) and Michaela (news correspondent). The visit took place from the 2nd to the 4th of November 2023. On the 3rd we drove more than 400km return from Polokwane to Tshitani in Thohoyandou (Venda) to visit Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church where Blessed Benedict Daswa's relics are kept. After Mass we were given a brief history of the life of Blessed Benedict Daswa and the shrine. While Sr Tshifhiwa Munzhedzi was addressing us, Bishop Slattery (who had originally promoted the cause of Benedict Daswa), arrived with some family members who were visiting from Ireland. The bishop gave a short talk. The shrine is busy on a day-to-day basis with visitors coming from all parts of the world. We were then taken to the site where Blessed Daswa was stoned to death. The day was a memorable experience, and we thank God for all those who dedicate themselves to work at the shrine and share the life of Blessed Daswa with us.



On the 4th of November we gathered again at Cathedral of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church for a short meeting and immediately after that we drove to Motse Maria high school at Ga-Mashashane (Romeng) village. Some of the CWL Polokwane diocese members attended high school there. We are assisting the school with renovations to a classroom that has fallen into disrepair. The process has been slow but we hope to finish this project before we leave office in 2024.

From Motse Maria we drove to Sekutu to visit the sisters at St Scholastica's Convent. They welcomed us with so much love. Many of them are elders and therefore are vulnerable, and we keep them in our prayers for a safe and healthy environment. Food parcels were donated by CWL Cathedral of Sacred Heart led by Ms Listrine Modiba (CWL president).

The day closed with holy Mass celebrated by Rev. Fr Boniface Mashiane at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. Thereafter we had the privilege of visiting Bishop Masela at his home.

On the 5th of November we attended the inauguration of two of our members at St Francis parish in Ga-Matlala. A third member was given her 10-year membership badge.

REGINA PACIS



CWL is indeed growing in our parish. On the 15th of October 2023 we enrolled three new members, Rosina Vorster-Lamola, Malehu Mothotoana and Livhuwana Gwangwa. On this day all our branches in our diocese came to support them. We celebrated holy Mass with our parish priest Father Lesetja Reuben Galane and Deacon Thomas, who gave the homily on our special day. After Mass all our members accompanied the newly inaugurated members to their homes one by one. What a happy day it was. We presented them to their families who were so happy and thanked us too.

As a token of our appreciation, we gave Father Galane a personalized fruit basket and a gift. We also gave our parish choir 5 musical beats as they supported us with hymns and choruses and made our day extra special. We also acknowledged our 2 sacristans Koko Mothotoana and Sesi Morongwa for helping us with decorations on the altar. Koko's daughter Malehu Mothotoana was one of the inaugurated members on the day.

We have three aspirants who will be inaugurated later this year.

In November we contributed funds to our yearly church project in the parish. We also contributed towards our church choir's fundraising and supported them as they hosted a Gala dinner at church to raise funds. Our sister parish St Peter and Paul CWL also came to support.

In the 4th quarter, we contributed funds towards diocesan seminars and Puno.

On the 24th of December it was our parish priest Father Lesetja Reuben Galane's priesthood anniversary and birthday celebration. We celebrated it as a parish and presented him with a gift and groceries.

We started 2024 with our annual school stationery project. We managed to give all our church children book covers

ST MARTIN DE PORRES



On the 31st of October and the 5th of November our CWL group joined the Sacred Heart sodality to buy stationery for school children in preparation for the final year exams. It was a good gesture because some of the children do not have those who can buy them these items for their exams.

DIOCESE OF POLOKWANE

ST GREGORY THE GREAT

2023 was a year of challenges and many trials. We found ourselves more on our knees than feet. We are grateful for the gift of life and opportunity of a new year. May God's will be done!

On the 15th of October we joined hands with our parishioners and prepared a well-considered birthday celebration for our parish priest Rev. Fr Donald Mabitsela. Our CWL members give 100% when handed a task to perform.

Lerato Marokane, a member of the CWL, was asked to lead a task team to organise the 2nd annual sports day. The aim is to raise funds for Holy Childhood celebration. The other CWL members showed great support and were among the first people to buy tickets. The fundraising event was a great success. On Sunday the 4th of February we finished off the task by organising the Holy Childhood celebration for the children of the parish.

We started the year well by celebrating 1st Friday Mass on the 5th of January!



DIOCESE OF PORT ELIZABETH (GQEBERIA)

CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION



On the 10th of December our priest celebrated the 23rd anniversary of his priesthood. We shared the special day with him and gave him a gift from CWL and friends.

On the 17th of December we visited our honorary member mam Macanda and gave her a goodie basket. She was so happy and took a wander down memory lane, sharing CWL news with us.

On the 24th of December we gave the children Christmas goody bags with sweets, and they were so thrilled.

CORPUS CHRISTI



On the 14th of October we supported the "Golden Oldies" event held at Morewag Primary School, and then a special Priesthood Sunday blessing. A gift and tea after mass were arranged for Fr Thembaletu on the 29th of October.

November had our League preparing frantically for our annual harvest market/mini fete. This was held on the 5th of November, and in the weeks leading up to the day many of our members were potting up plants, baking for the cake and pudding table, and clearing out for the books/white elephant table. It was a resounding success.

The next big annual event, the running of the "coffee shop" at the Christmas Market at Old Grey Club, was over the weekend of 23rd-25th November. Pauline Potgieter and her team of helpers provided much needed refreshments for all the shoppers. All the proceeds of this coffee shop are in aid of our charities to whom we donate at the end of each year, but most

of the proceeds were donated to our parish, Corpus Christi, for much needed work on the roof.

During December our members enjoyed their annual gathering at the Diocesan CWL Christmas Party hosted by the Sacred Heart CWL. Much fun and camaraderie were had by all who attended.

Another gathering, held on the 8th of December, was a bring and braai arranged to bid farewell to one of our CWL members, Elvira Mitchell, and her husband, mother and four children who had been active members of Corpus Christi for over 25 years. They have relocated to Knysna and have joined St Boniface Parish there.

Finally, a small gathering of members met at our chairlady Sheila Thyse's home on the 13th of December to discuss the final distribution of monies to various charities and then to reflect on the year gone by and all the work completed.

DIOCESE OF PORT ELIZABETH (GQEBERHA)

SACRED HEART



Our condolences go to our CWL sister Treasure Nquma on the tragic passing of her son Sidwell on the 18th of September. CWL prepared and served the eats for the tea following the funeral mass.

Sacred Heart hosted a mission lead by Redemptorist priests Fr Tyrone Sam and Fr Larry Kaufman. Our members participated by attending the various sessions and events, and 3 of our group hosted home Masses during the mission. Some of our ladies responded to the call to provide food for the visiting priests who were very well nourished during their stay.

The anticipated CWL Golden Oldies fundraiser took place on Friday the 27th of October. The organizing committee was pleased to have all tickets sold, and the support of all the members in one way or another resulted in everything running smoothly.

CWL celebrated Priesthood Sunday on the 29th of October. Deacon Lawrence read out a prayer and blessing over Fr Lubabalo on behalf of CWL. We served tea and cake to celebrate Fr Lubabalo. During October, CWL led the Rosary before the Tuesday evening and weekend Masses. Thank you to the ladies who participated in this integral spiritual part of our ministry.

Members knitted baby jerseys, caps and blankets which were handed over to Isithembiso Babies' Home. This crucial knitting and crochet initiative, which has been part of our League's practical ministry since its inception, clothes babies who otherwise would have nothing to wear. Our member Doreen donated and delivered babygros to West End Maternity hospital on the 8th of November.

CWL members continue to serve tea after 8am Mass on allocated Sunday slots as well as doing soup kitchen duties on allocated Saturdays. Family food parcels also are still being distributed each month.

SAN FRANCESCO

Our workshop ladies once again produced lots of blankets and jerseys to be given to the Sisters of Mercy, as well as booties for distribution.

On the 7th of October, 11 candidates were confirmed by the bishop and CWL ladies served coffee and tea for this special occasion in the parish hall. The ladies also assisted at a few funeral teas.

Nancy at Ethemba Soup Kitchen in Forest Hill thanked us profusely for the 2 bags of soup powder that they received. We also received a thank you message from Fr Valentine from Booysen Park Soup Kitchen.

Once again, our thanks to Elaine for another successful bingo evening which raised R5315.

On Sunday the 26th of November we had an hour of adoration on the Feast of Corpus Christi.

On the 30th of November we held our bumper bingo evening in the hall, our last for the year.

A workshop was held on the 18th of November to make up the gift packs for all our guests attending the senior citizens' party. Each guest was given a small packet of biscuits, coffee sachet, tissues and chocolates at the lunch held on the 2nd of December, which was preceded by holy Mass.

ARCHDIOCESE OF PRETORIA

DIOCESAN



On the 30th of September we held a morning market to raise funds for our charity projects. Despite extensive marketing of the event and a safe venue with great parking facilities, we did not get foot traffic. However, the atmosphere was excellent and we had lots of fun. Pictured are the diocesan exco members congratulating the winners of the morning market raffle.

On the 4th of November, we participated in and supported the Archdiocese Fun Day, organised by the archdiocesan pastoral council. We had a traditional food stall at the event. Our stall was very popular and was visited by the archbishop himself, and much to our delight, he chose to have a meal there.

From the 25th to the 26th of November we held a special joint event of a solemn retreat and celebration of our 85th anniversary in existence. This year-end retreat was a massive, first-of-its-kind feat for the archdiocese, with a vigil and sleep over programme as requested by members. One of the standout moments of the programme was the unveiling of a “new look” banner for CWL Pretoria archdiocese.



Pictured are Bishop Phalane and the diocesan exco celebrating 85 years of CWL in Pretoria.

The Saturday evening programme included an all-white Candlelight Memorial Service to honour in a special way CWL sisters who have passed on, and in memory of members’ deceased family and loved ones. This was coupled with a moving Healing and Anointing Service that soothed souls. The hall was filled with members clothed in white, and the emotive praise and worship hymns added to the stirring ambiance. The retreat was not only a successful faith revival and reflection session, but also a time to look back and appreciate the great strides that the CWL in the Pretoria archdiocese has made over the past 85 years. Veterans Aunty Pat van der Valk and Mama Augusta Matime got a chance to share anecdotal stories as well as lessons learnt along their many years journeying with the CWL. The event was a huge hit and inspired members to continue serving others through selfless acts of charity, work and loyalty.

We held a pre-Lenten retreat at St. Augustine in Silverton. Aptly themed “New Beginnings”, it kick-started the new CWL work calendar year with a day of reflective prayer and renewal of spirit. The retreat, led by diocesan chaplain Father Thomas and parish priest Father Tatu, was well attended. These gatherings not only give spiritual focus and direction, but also offer members an opportunity for joint fellowship and networking as well as exchanging of ideas on how to further our charity objectives. As part of the offertory, members donated school stationery to be donated to the beneficiaries of the host branch.

ST ANTHONY, SOSHANGUVE

On the 22nd of October we had a parish pastoral outreach to St Mary Magdalene, also in Soshanguve.

On the 3rd of December we handed out 13 specially made rosaries to the First Holy Communion children.

HOLY TRINITY, OLIFANTSFONTEIN



Our priesthood celebration was held on the 1st of October. We served lunch to our visitors, brothers from St John Vianney, seminarians and our parish priest Fr Benoit.

We attended the year-end retreat at the Good Shepherd Centre at the end of November.

We participated in a thanksgiving mass at our parish church on the 6th of December.

Pictured are Holy Trinity members and their guests.

ARCHDIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG

CHURCH OF THE PRESENTATION, MONTANA



We celebrated our priest Fr Patrick Rakeketsi on Priesthood Sunday. He had just celebrated his Silver Jubilee in September 2023. We thank the Almighty God for his life and service to our parish. Our ladies came together to share their knowledge and expertise in planning for the year 2024. The planning process is the backbone of every successful organization. Involving everyone in the planning process helps make sure that all understand the goal and what needs to be done to reach it.

ST PIUS X, WATERKLOOF



At the end of November we had a community outreach to our beneficiaries. Among them are about 26 families who were receiving aid through the FLC, which unfortunately is closing its doors due to the resolutions taken after the Department of Social Development cut their funding/subsidy. We donated gift boxes to orphaned children from Hammanskraal. The gift boxes included stationery for use in 2024, as well as Christmas gifts including T-shirts, sweet treats, and toiletries. The theme for the Christmas gifts was "Stars for Smiles".

Grocery relief packs were also purchased for the families taking care of these vulnerable children. We were joyful that we could reach out to them.

Our branch has taken a resolution to continue to reach out to the beneficiaries even after FLC shuts its doors.

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART, MIDRAND



At the end of September we said farewell to our parish priest Father Jijesh Paul and welcomed our new priest Father Shibu Augustine. On Priesthood Sunday we presented Father Shibu with a small gift.

CWL members held Marian rallies during the month of October. We have three rally captains among our members, Sis Lungi, Sis Mary and Sis Zesuliwe.

We attended the November retreat at Good Shepherd Centre.

Our CWL sisters decorated the church for the feast of Mother Mary's birthday. It was greatly appreciated by our church community as it made the event extra special. Many photos were taken by CWL members and parishioners.

We arranged a Christmas party for about 100 children at Mom Dolly's. During the year we provide grocery parcels and supplies to them. The children enjoyed a meal of curry chicken, vegetables, ice cream and party packs.

Our ladies organised a year-end retreat and social event at the beginning of December. Sister Julie conducted a very spiritual reflection at the convent, after which the sisters enjoyed a bring and share social in the hall.

CATHEDRAL OF THE SACRED HEART, PRETORIA



On the 30th of September our sisters enjoyed participating in helping the diocesan CWL to raise funds. We got to meet other branches on a social level which is pivotal to social cohesion.

On the 22nd of October our priest Father Thabiso Ledwaba was celebrated by members of the CWL. We conducted a short programme in the presence of Radio Veritas and members of other groups in the church. We started with prayers for vocations and our priest. A short speech spoke directly to his journey as a priest. He was encouraged to persevere until he receives his crown from God. We presented him with gifts which he gratefully received. Then a sumptuous lunch was served. On the 30th of November our branch bought a stove for the parish as part of the 90th celebration of the Cathedral. On the 11th of December the nuns of Hammanskraal

were treated to an annual year-end party at a Menlyn restaurant. Our ladies wore green and gold, the colours chosen for our theme. The Sisters of the Handmaid of Christ came to the party in transport sponsored by one of our generous CWL members. Every year we give them gifts for Christmas. These are our special moms under whose care God placed us in 2010. It was Bishop Victor Phalane who identified them as the first people who needed our support. Every quarter we buy them groceries and take the groceries to them at their home. We take along lunch to share with them. We listen to their problems and attend to them immediately. When they are sick and admitted to hospital we visit them. Our branch started the year with a well-attended meeting of members and prospective members on the 10th of February. We had the honour of welcoming two new recruits, Belinda and Boiketlo, whom we hope to enrol this year.

ARCHDIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG

CHURCH OF THE BEATITUDES, ZWAVELPOORT



Our branch held a Christmas party for the children of Alfonso Orphanage in Bronkhorstspuit during the festive season. The children and caretakers were given meals for the Christmas party, with one parishioner having baked a cake to accompany the festive spirit for the day. The continued joint efforts of Zwavelpoort's CWL and St. Paulos' Primary School ensured that Santa's jolly spirit was shared, with the students of St. Paulos' preparing gift boxes for the children of the orphanage.

We held a fundraiser (Sip and Paint) for the purchase of sanitary pads for the young women of Boitshepo Secondary School in Marokolong, Hammanskraal. The drive was welcomed by both the students of Boitshepo and the teachers.

ST AUGUSTINE, SILVERTON



Our branch celebrated Priestwood Sunday on the 29th of October. We were blessed to have two priests in our midst, a consecrated Comboni Brother Erich (MHSRIP) and two Comboni seminarians. We had our sister Otilia hosting us at her house. It was a huge success.

Caritas SA dedicated Sunday the 19th of November to the poor throughout the country. As our contribution we packed food parcels and distributed them to those in need, at the train station and the park. We lived our motto of charity, work and loyalty in meeting Christ in the poor and the homeless.

We ended the year with a planning meeting session. We met under the trees, where we were one with nature. We came up with some resolutions to implement in 2024. We remembered our Holy Father Pope Francis' message about caring for our home, the earth.

We started 2024 in prayer with a retreat held on the 13th of January. Our spiritual director was Fr Tlholo Rapule, a parish priest from Diepsloot. He encouraged the members to be the best version of themselves in imitating Christ. He also advised us to serve in humility and not "show off" our charities. He encouraged us to pray and love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

OBITUARIES

Rene Snyders, Cape Town



26 September 1966 – 10 November 2023.

Rene was a humble and dedicated lady. She taught catechism and personally saw that the children reached their homes safely on foot. She also had the duty of cleaning the church. She will be greatly missed by all at Macassar.. Please keep her young sons who are in grade 8 and 10 in your prayers. They are now orphans as they lost their father to cancer a year ago.

Cathy Pillay, Pietermaritzburg (Durban)

Cathy was a long-standing and hard working past president and vice-president of St Mary's CWL. Cathy moved up from nursing sister to matron and then opened her own nursing school. She was truly a dedicated nurse and child of God, always showing her gentle, kind and patient manner. Being sick did not stop her from always smiling. Rest in peace dear Cathy.

Vera Casemiro Nunes van Der Merwe, Durban

4 March 1933 - 17 December 2023

Vera was a member of the Assumption Branch and president for a year. She was well known in the parish. RIP Vera, your friends miss you.

OBITUARIES

Cynthia Jones, Durban



Cynthia, who died on the 10th of October 2023, had been a member of the Catholic Women's League since 1975. 48 years! She was worthily recognized for her commitment to the League and honorary life membership was bestowed upon her by the National CWL Council. This is a wonderful accolade for her dedicated service. Our League's motto is "Charity, Work and Loyalty", and this motto epitomizes everything that Cynthia stood for.

From 2011 to 2012, Cynthia was president of Holy Trinity Branch. She was a vibrant president who really inspired each member to commit themselves totally to the causes of our League. Cynthia certainly led by example and her charitable work was extraordinary. Her personality was such that Cynthia always thought of others before herself.

Cynthia was originally a member of the Assumption branch. While the branch was in recess, Cynthia and the late Vera Bruce made scrolls with ribbons and handed them out to all the ladies of the parish to encourage them to become members. This had quite an impact, and in no time the branch was up and running again!

Cynthia leaves behind four children, a son, Wayne and three daughters, Michele, Shan and Dawn.

May Cynthia's soul, through God's love and mercy, rest in peace and may perpetual light shine upon her.

Ms Nomabali Maria Assumpta Malawana, Daveyton, Johannesburg

21 July 1952 – 30 September 2023

Nomabali was enrolled in the CWL in November 1999. She was a diligent and loyal member and served with confidence and pride. She served two terms as branch vice secretary from 1999 to 2006. She also served as vice president for two terms from 2013 to 2019. She served as a vice regional president of the ERRC. Those who worked closely with her described her as deeply religious and knowledgeable about the Bible. She was very sociable and friendly, always with a beautiful smile. She passed away after a long period of illness. She will be sadly missed by her family and colleagues.

Linda van der Haar, Johannesburg

14 April 1956 – 11 January 2024



Linda van der Haar was married to the late Dan van der Haar and the family was blessed with a son, daughter and twins. She was a parishioner of St Francis of Assisi in Reiger Park. She joined the League in 1988 and in her 25 years of service served as president and secretary respectively for two consecutive terms. She was an assertive and diligent member with good organisational skills. She also served as a vice-president in the East Rand Regional Council and as a delegate in the Diocesan Council. She was a dedicated member of her parish, where she served as a funeral minister for 20 years. She was the only organiser of Heritage Dance. She passed away in January after a short, sudden illness. She is survived by 2 of her children. She will be sadly missed by her family, friends and all in CWL Johannesburg. May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

Mrs. Zandile Mkhize, Johannesburg



Mrs. Zandile Mkhize was a member of St Lambert Catholic Church in Daveyton. She was enrolled as a member of the CWL in November 1999. She celebrated her 70th birthday in October 2023. She was a dedicated, diligent, and reliable member who participated in all the activities of her branch. She was responsible for the maintenance of the altar cloths and vestments of the church. She served in the leadership structure of the branch for two terms as a member of the executive.

She passed away on the 12th of January 2024 after a short and sudden illness. She was a widow who is survived by three children. She will be dearly missed by family, friends, and fellow parishioners.

May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

Daisy Maimela, Johannesburg

Daisy Maimela passed away shortly before she was due to be enrolled as a member in the newly formed CWL branch at St Hubert's, Alexandra

OBITUARIES

Me Kedibone Merriam Sekaledi, Kimberley

19 September 1950 – 12 January 2024



It is with great sadness we announce the passing of our fellow sister, Me Kedibone Merriam Sekaledi. Me Sekaledi enrolled as a member of St Rose of Lima Catholic Church in August 2015 in Kimberley. Me. Sekaledi was a true member of the League, faithfully living according to the League's motto of charity, work and loyalty. She lived with her sister Me. Puseletso Mosiea who is also a member of CWL in the branch. She had lived with her for a very long time and took care of her after she had suffered a stroke. She contributed all that was required of her in terms of charity, despite being a pensioner. Me. Sekaledi was a loyal member of the League who attended meetings and League activities. We are very saddened by Me. Sekaledi's passing. May her soul and those of the faithful departed rest in eternal peace.

LORD HELP ME

Lord, help me to be strong but keep me humble.
To be always grateful to you for the blessings bestowed on me.
When others are unkind to me, help me to show kindness.
As I grieve the loss of my siblings help me not to bring grief to others.
As I travel through the darkness, help me to see the light.
When I stumble along the way, keep me on the straight and narrow.
Help me to show compassion through my hurt and pain.
When things happen that I don't understand help me to show understanding to others.
Through my tears give me enough sight to see the tears of others.
In you I trust Lord. Help me to never question your will.
Give me wisdom when I need to be wise,
Patience when I need it the most and forgiveness always.
Help me Lord, help me.
Amen.

Jenny Parent
Archdiocese of Durban

CHARITY, WORK AND LOYALTY IN ACTION



CWL from the Church of the Resurrection, Gqeberha, visiting an honorary member.



CWL Sacred Heart, Gqeberha.



CWL members attending the Bloemfontein archdiocesan AGM.



Ladies from the De Aar diocese at their AGM



Staff at the Khayelitsha Day Hospital with items for the children's ward Christmas party. Cape Town diocesan provided more than 100 knitted teddy bears for the occasion.

CHARITY, WORK AND LOYALTY IN ACTION



Bishop Lavis in Cape Town enrolled 7 new members and 5 old members renewed their commitment.



St Martin CWL, Orlando West, enrolling new members.



Members of St Margaret CWL, Diepkloof, celebrating the 30th anniversary of their branch.



CWL members from Sacred Heart Cathedral, Pretoria, at the diocesan morning market.