



Catholic Women's League

Diocese of St. Catharines



National CWL: cwl.ca

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Compiled & Edited by:

deedeealexandre321@gmail.com

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2026 is Here!!!



Happy New Year

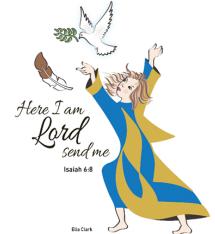
President's Message



Thursday, January 1, 2026

Dear Bishop Bergie, Father Richard Kowalchuk, Clergy, and Sisters in the League!

We made it! Good for us! Whether you stayed up to ring in the New Year or went to sleep early, we're all waking up to the brand-new year. There have been two topics that have been on my heart that I would like to address with you: stepping outside your comfort zone and conflict resolutions; both are appropriate for the start of the new year.



1. Stepping up out of your comfort zone: are you presented with opportunities in your life for consideration? Whether it is trying a new recipe, travelling to Spain, becoming a minister at your parish, taking on a leadership role with the CWL, or starting a new hobby, do you embrace these opportunities with zeal and zest? Or are you prone to overthinking and declining? If it's the latter, I'd like to share with you two questions to ask yourself in order to embrace given opportunities with zeal and zest:

- ask yourself: what is the worst thing that will happen?** will your new dish not work out? will your luggage get lost? You get the idea! Identify that outcome in your head and take steps to prevent it. Purchase an outrageous-coloured piece of luggage! Remember, if you have time to worry, you have time to pray!
- ask yourself: what are you afraid of?** avoidance, after all, is fear-based. Again, identifying your fear diminishes it. Are you afraid you're not qualified to be a church minister? --there's training! there's not a "CWL school! learn from others. Afraid you're too old to start a new hobby? remember that you're younger today than you'll be tomorrow! Are you afraid what people will say? what will they think? that people will make fun of you? Let them! That's out of your hands. Don't let anyone, including yourself, stop you from shining more this year! Utilize your God-given time, talents, and treasures! Embrace 2026! Say yes!

2. Conflict Resolution: no one likes to engage in conflict, but we all experience it. At the outset, maybe not all relationships are worth saving. That's fine--but for those that are worth saving, I'd like to share what I do when I get upset. Automatically, I determine in my mind: will I be upset for 10 minutes? half a day? two days? rarely is it

longer. What is significant here is that there is a foreseeable end to my being upset. I refuse to be in a position of undeterminable anger. To me, to have any chance at redeeming a relationship, I dialogue with the person--maintaining open communication is vital. None of this: "I'm not talking to..." for an indeterminable length of time. Before you know it, weeks become months which become years--and anger tends to fester.

And, of course, the final act in conflict resolution is forgiveness--yourself, the other person, and the situation. I came across this nugget: "Our problem following Jesus is we're trying to be a better version of us, rather than a more accurate reflection of him."--it may take reading the "Our Father" very carefully! And, consider also asking yourself: what's the worst thing that will happen? what are you afraid of? Be like Jesus who practiced radical love.

That's it! Except for this other nugget: "Believing in God, but not obeying Him is exactly what Satan does."

Have a Great 2026!

Deedee Alexandre--905-732-4782 deedeecl321@gmail.com

Grief Share: facilitated by Deedee Alexandre

*We've all lost a significant person in our life. Whether it was a friend, spouse, parent, aunt, uncle, cousin, child, we've all experienced grief. The loss may have been recent or long ago. Either way, if you believe that you have some unresolved grief, you may want to join the 14-week long Grief Share program starting **Friday, January 9** at St. Alexander Parish in the Inspiration Lounge from **6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.***

This is a video-based program that has an excellent accompanying workbook--\$30.00. Learn some strategies and some phrases/vocabulary to express yourself more adequately.

If you are interested, please register with either Jeanie in the office--905-892-3090 or Deedee--905-732-4782. The group is capped at 10 participants. This is open to all Christian denominations--men and women; you don't have to belong to the CWL.

Book Study: facilitated by Deedee Alexandre

Zoom starting on **Saturday, January 17 at 11 a.m.** -- for approximately 7 weeks

Experts in Humanity by Dr. Josephine Lombardi--available on Amazon

This book is an exploration into what makes us different and yet the same. It seeks to help us understand ourselves and others. It focuses on influencing factors that shape our behaviour—prenatal and then nature/nurture. All of this is from a Catholic perspective which is both reassuring and compassionate. Approximately 20 pages a week.

Please contact me by Thursday, January 15 if you plan to be part of this book study—I will send you the Zoom link.

Deedee: 905-732-4782 deedeecl321@gmail.com



From the
old to the
new year:
Words from
Pope Leo

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[Kathleen N. Hattrup](#) - published on 12/31/25

God is Love! God loves me! God awaited me, and I have found him! God is mercy! God is forgiveness! God is salvation! God, yes, God is life!

As the last day of 2025 has fallen on a Wednesday, Pope Leo has had a unique chance to reflect on the end of the year and the graces to come.

At the general audience this morning, December 31, he considered some of the graces and sorrows of the past 12 months, particularly the millions of people who made pilgrimages to Rome to cross the Holy Doors, and the death of Pope Francis.

Also present at the audience were relics of St. Thérèse, which the Pope venerated.



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As well, he offered a special greeting to some two-dozen youth from Palestine who were able to be at the audience.

Quoting another Pope Leo, Leo the I (the Great,) the Holy Father noted:

His invitation is addressed today to all of us, holy by Baptism, because God has become our companion on the journey towards true Life; to us sinners, because, forgiven, with his grace we can stand up and set off again; and finally, to us, poor and fragile, because the Lord, making our weakness his own, has redeemed it and shown us the beauty and strength of his perfect humanity

Here is the full text of his reflection:

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

We are gathering for this moment of reflection on the last day of the calendar year, close to the end of the Jubilee and at the heart of Christmas time.

The past year has certainly been marked by important events: some of them joyful, such as the pilgrimage of so many of the faithful on the occasion of the Holy Year;

others painful, such as the passing of the late Pope Francis, and the scenarios of war that continue to convulse the planet. At its end, the Church invites us to place everything before the Lord, entrusting ourselves to his Providence, and asking him to renew, in us and around us, in the coming days, the wonders of his grace and mercy.

It is in this dynamic that the tradition of the solemn singing of the *Te Deum*, with which we will thank the Lord this evening for the blessings we have received, finds its place. We will sing, “You are God: we praise you”, “In you, Lord, is our hope”, “Have mercy on us”. In this regard, Pope Francis observed that while “worldly gratitude, worldly hope are evident … they are focused on the self, on its interests … Instead, in this Liturgy … one breathes an entirely different atmosphere: one of praise, of wonder, of gratitude” (*Homily of First Vespers of the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God*, 31 December 2023).

And it is with these attitudes that today we are called upon to reflect on what the Lord has done for us over the past year, as well as to examine our consciences honestly, to evaluate our response to his



gifts and to ask forgiveness for all the times we have failed to treasure his inspirations and invest the talents he has entrusted to us in the best possible way (cf. *Mt 25:14-30*).

This leads us to reflect on another great sign that has accompanied us in recent months: that of the “journey” and the “destination”. This year, countless

pilgrims have come from all over the world to pray at the Tomb of Peter and to confirm their adherence to Christ. This reminds us that our whole life is a journey, whose final destination transcends space and time, to be fulfilled in the encounter with God and in full and eternal communion with Him (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1024). We will also ask for this in the *Te Deum* prayer, when we say: “Bring us with your saints to glory everlasting”. It is no coincidence that Saint Paul VI defined the Jubilee as a great act of faith in “anticipation of future destinies ... which we already foretaste and ... prepare for” (*General Audience*, 17 December 1975).

And in this eschatological light of the encounter between the finite and the infinite, a third sign can be seen: the passage through the Holy Door, which so many of us have made, praying and imploring forgiveness for ourselves and our loved ones. It expresses our “yes” to God, who with his forgiveness invites us to cross the threshold of a new life, animated by grace, modelled on the Gospel, inflamed by “love for that neighbour, in whose definition ... every man is included ... in need of understanding, help, comfort, sacrifice, even if personally unknown to us, even if bothersome and hostile, but endowed with the incomparable dignity of a brother” (Saint Paul VI, *Homily on the occasion of the closing of the Holy Year*, 25 December 1975; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1826-1827). It is our “yes” to a life lived with commitment in the present and oriented towards eternity.

Dear friends, we meditate on these signs in the light of Christmas. Saint Leo the Great, in this regard, saw the feast of the Birth of Jesus as the proclamation of a joy that is for everyone: “Let the saint rejoice,” he exclaimed, “because he is approaching his reward; let the sinner rejoice, because he is offered forgiveness; let the pagan take courage, because he is called to life” (*First Discourse on the Nativity of the Lord*, 1).

His invitation is addressed today to all of us, holy by Baptism, because God has become our companion on the journey towards true Life; to us sinners, because, forgiven, with his grace we can stand up and set off again; and finally, to us, poor and fragile, because the Lord, making our weakness his own, has redeemed it and shown us the beauty and strength of his perfect humanity (cf. *Jn* 1:14).

Therefore, I would like to conclude by remembering the words with which Saint Paul VI, at the end of the Jubilee of 1975, described its fundamental message. It is contained, he said, in one word: “love.” And he added, “God is Love! This is the ineffable revelation with which the Jubilee, through its teaching, its indulgence, its forgiveness and finally its peace, full of tears and joy, has sought to fill our spirit today and our lives tomorrow: God is Love! God loves me! God awaited me, and I have found him! God is mercy! God is forgiveness! God is salvation! God, yes, God is life!” (*General Audience*, 17 December 1975). May these thoughts accompany us in the passage from the old to the new year, and then always, in our lives.

Special greetings:

I extend a warm welcome this morning to all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s Audience, especially those coming from Australia, China, Palestine, the Philippines and the United States of America. As we prepare for tomorrow’s celebration of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, let us entrust the coming year to her maternal intercession. To all of you and your families, I offer my prayerful good wishes for a blessed Christmas season and a new year filled with joy and peace. God bless you all!

The Church lists the corporal works of mercy as follows:

1. **Feeding the hungry**
2. **Giving drink to the thirsty**
3. **Sheltering the homeless**
4. **Clothing the naked**
5. **Visiting the sick**
6. **Visiting the imprisoned** (sometimes listed as “**ransoming the captive**”)
7. **Burying the dead**

The Church lists the spiritual works of mercy as follows:

1. **To instruct the ignorant**
2. **To counsel the doubtful**
3. **To admonish sinners**
4. **To bear wrongs patiently**
5. **To forgive offenses willingly**
6. **To comfort the afflicted**
7. **To pray for the living and the dead**



