

Annual Report
St. Catharines Diocesan CWL
April 23, 2024

National President: Shari Guinta
Here I am Lord, send me

Provincial President: Linda Squarzolo
Go Make A Difference

Diocesan President: Lisa Fillingham
Matthew 25:40 You did it for me

Index

	Page
Ontario Annual Reports 2023	
President, Lisa Fillingham	4
Organization – Lisa Fillingham,	6
Treasurer - Dina Marchionda	8
Faith, -Deedee Alexandre	9
Service – Diane Szydlowski	11
Social Justice – Sue Pellerin	13
Secretary – Karen Hofstede	14
Past President – Frances Murdaca	15
Annual Written Reports	
Spiritual Adviser – Fr. Richard Kowalchuk	16
President/Organization – Lisa Fillingham	18
President Elect – Deedee Alexandre	19
Treasurer – Dina Marchionda	20
Service – Diane Szydlowski	21
Social Justice – Sue Pellerin	22
Communications – Theresa Murphy	23
Karen Hofstede – Secretary (resigned, no report)	
Past President – Frances Murdaca	24

Service Pin Recipients

Insignia Pins	25
5 Year Pins	26
10 Year Pins	27
15 Year Pins	28
20 Year Pins	29
25 Year Pins	30
30 Year Pins	30
35 Year Pins	31
40 Year Pins	32
45 Year Pins	32
50 Year Pins	32
55 Year Pins	32
60 Years Pins	33
65 Year Pins	33
70 Year Pins	33
75 Year Pins	33
Maple Service Pin	33
Anniversaries	34
Membership Growth Award	34

ONTARIO ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

DIOCESE: St. Catharines

PRESIDENT: Lisa Fillingham

of parishes responding 27 of 30

of life members 11

Councils moving to the new structure in 2024, prepared by:

- Attending either in person or via zoom the power point on the subject
- Power point was emailed to all presidents for reference
- Provided print out from National and prepared binders for the new positions

The Unity Outreach Project was presented to 27 #/ 90 % of councils in the diocese and most councils found it was:

- A wonderful opportunity for members to share, ask questions in a relaxed atmosphere
- Nice to be included and know our thoughts are welcome
- Enjoyable, productive communication

Many councils had specific projects/focuses for the year that touched on all pillars. Some were new to the diocese, for example:

- 100th anniversary party for St. Vincent de Paul
- Soctober, Warmvember, eye glass collection for third world countries, pop tabs for the purchase of purchasing wheel chairs
- Delivering the Eucharist to adult residences
- Drove migrants to Mass
- Blood/Plasma donations
- Hope Center, McNally House, Women's Place, Chez Marie, Chalice and Development and Peace were supported

During the year, significant and/or unusual activities reported by Presidents included:

- St. Vincent de Paul 100th Anniversary started a knitting/crochet group to make 100 scarves for the homeless. This became an ecumenical group which made 250 scarves, 15 prayers shawls and lap blankets
- Attended a 9 week zoom/in person program using the guide “Listening to Indigenous Circles”
- Presentation on Today’s Housing Crisis
- Palliative Care/Hospice Night – guest speaker
- Blood Donor representative spoke at Masses and at CWL meeting
- 70th Anniversary Party for St. Kevin
- Worked on the “Rocks of Kindness Project”

Recommendations for improvement(s) in policy, guidelines, or reporting related to the President position at what level of the League.

- National – emails should go to ALL members. Not to the president to send to presidents and/or members.
-

ONTARIO ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

DIOCESE: St. Catharines_____

Organization: Lisa Fillingham

of parishes responding 27_of30

Annual membership campaigns included new and creative ideas, for example:

- CWL members were gathered at the entrances , handed out membership information sheets and discussed what the CWL is and all we do for the community. Conversations about “Every Catholic woman should be a member of the Catholic Women’s League” led to questions and repeating it 3 weeks in a row, at all Masses with consistent answers and showing a united front was very encouraging. This led to 33 new members!!!

Other activities were undertaken to retain current members and to promote the league to prospective members:

Common strategies used in the diocese:

- To promote the league and retain current members were:
 - Communicated special events, sent cards/letters for significant life events, visited members who cannot attend church, mail minutes and newsletters
- To attract prospective members were:
 - Sash Sunday/CWL Mass where members sit together with scarves/sashes to be present and create awareness
 - Ask, ask, ask
 - Events held – separate table set up with CWL information and women available to speak about the league
 - Be enthusiastic when speaking about the league
 - Promote spirituality

New and creatives strategies used in the diocese were:

- Starting to have a CWL Corner in the bulletin, do newsletters, have events for all women of the parish to attend. Ex High Tea
- Personally invite all women parishioners to attend retreats and workshops whether members or not. Inclusion is key

Councils faced the following challenges to membership development:

- Many members are aging and choose not to attend meetings, retreats, workshops
- Women think that the membership is an overwhelming commitment
- Very few younger people attend church, so getting younger women to join is very difficult
- Same pool of women do all the work and they are getting tired and frustrated
- Active parishioners in other ministries had an issue at some point with the CWL and join/rejoin

Councils primarily used {top 3 regular communication and top 2 social media} as methods of communication to keep membership informed:

- Email, Meetings, Telephone
- Website, Facebook

List any recommendations for improvements in policy, guidelines, or reporting related to the Vice-President position and membership including identifying at what level of the League.

-

ONTARIO ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

DIOCESE: St. Catharines _____

TREASURER: Dina Marchionda

of parishes responding 27 of 30

Indicate the total donations to national voluntary funds:

- Catholic Missions in Canada 1960 _____
- Catholic Near East Welfare Association 1000
- Coady International Institute 100
- Development and Peace – Caritas Canada 750

Total donations to all charities in 2023 3810 _____

Significant and/or unusual donations reported were (indicate Parish-P or Diocesan-D):

- Money is spent on yarn for all the prayer shawl ministries and material for cancer turbans that is not reported (Parishes)

List any recommendations for improvements in policy, guidelines, or reporting related to the Treasurer position and communication including identifying at what level of the League.

- A standard treasurer report that can be downloaded to use monthly so from diocese to diocese information is the same

DIOCESE: St. Catharines _____

of parishes responding 27 of 30

PILLAR: _____ FAITH _____

LEADER: Deedee Alexandre _____

Spiritual advisors were involved in activities for 27 #/ 90__ % of councils.

Councils(#) assisted members in their communal and personal prayer life through:

- Used a variety of prayer styles for meetings 19__
- Raised awareness of online prayer services/webinars 14__
- Organized or promoted retreats, days of reflection 22__
- Encouraged religious reading and/or participation in book clubs 7__
- Used spiritual resources from the national website 6__
- Encouraged use of apps or subscriptions for daily mass readings 3__
- Encouraged praying the psalter/psalms 1__

Councils reported new forms of prayer and spirituality used, including:

- Members were assigned to present the life of a saint of their choice at each monthly meeting
- Inspirational readings with response/discussion
- Learn about Indigenous Spirituality
- Attend virtual events
- Prayer calendars were made for those who were/are unwell
- Held a Sedar Supper
- Each meeting discuss "Where as God been active in your life recently?"
- Living Rosary

Councils(#) assisted members in their growth in the Catholic faith by:

- Shared information from Catholic sources 15__
- Raised awareness of Catholic resources such as websites 17__
- Scheduled guest speakers on religious topics 6__
- Reported on progress of Synod on Synodality begun in 2022 12__
- Encouraged study of the Catechism of the Catholic Church 3__
- Studied/read encyclicals by Pope Francis 2__

- Studied/read Vatican II documents 1__

Councils initiated and/or participated in ecumenical or interfaith activities such as:

Attended World Day of Prayer Program Alpha
 Worked with Grace Mennonite to donate lap blankets for a project entitled "Bears and Blankets" Prayer Shawl Ministry invited participation from the non-Catholic churches in the area to join Members
 participated with the Anglican Church Out of the Cold Program

Councils(#) supported and/or promoted religious vocations through:

- Donated to a seminary fund 3__
- Supported consecrated women religions through prayer or donations 3__
- Invited a guest speaker on vocations to ordained ministry/consecrated life 0__
- Sponsored League membership to novitiates and/or consecrated women religious 1__

Councils(#) upheld or advocated for the sanctity of life by:

- Promoted pro-life events and encouraged member participation 18__
- Donated to pro-life causes 12__
- Participated in 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care 9__
- Participated in March for Life or similar public pro-life gatherings 9__
- Included pro-life prayers and reports in meetings 10__
- Wrote letters to government against abortion and/or MAiD 6__
- Participated in 40 Days for Life prayer vigils 8__
- Participated in pro-life webinars or guest speaker events 5__

List any recommendations for improvements in policy, guidelines, or reporting related to the faith pillar including identifying at what level of the League.

- It would be beneficial to have a monthly Spiritual Program on the National website to assist parishes whose chair is vacant. That way spiritual is still included in the meeting and all parishes are on the same path

ONTARIO ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

DIOCESE: St. Catharines_____

of parishes responding 27 of 30

PILLAR: _____ SERVICE _____

LEADER: Diane Szydlowski_____

Catholic Education was promoted within council’s community or parish through:

- We participate with the Knights of Columbus with the “Meet and Greet” at the beginning of the school year. They set up a BBQ for the students and parents
- Provide bursaries and scholarships
- Vacation Bible School
- Attempting to sponsor junior members from our feeder high school
- Created bookmarks for all the children
- Attended the opening of the newly renovated elementary school
- Many have Rosary Circles

- Awareness of mental health (teen suicide, bullying, etc.) was raised through:
- Guest speakers on homeless, abused women, human trafficking, mental health
- Participated in the Bee Compassionate project where a parish newsletter will be addressed on homelessness
- A guest speaker from an organization called “Carson” who assists children living on the streets due to their drug addictions
-

Awareness of palliative care was raised through:

- Email sent to members on resources from diocesan and provincial on palliative care
- Participate in 12 hours of prayer for palliative care
- A doctor speaking about palliative care
- McNally House – our members help out
- Presentation of 6 guest speakers on palliative and hospice care. Postcards were handed out
- Speaker from Norfolk/Haldimand on community hospice

- Prayer shawls given to palliative and hospice patients
- Cancer turbans made for oncology patients

Activities promoted the need to care for the environment:

- No plastic bottles used or purchased (water and juice)
- Speaker from Master Gardeners; great environmentalists
- Salvaging, upcycling, recycling

Councils educated members and their parish communities on women's health issues:

- Right to Life speaker on abortions and women's health
- Awareness each month on a specific topic – cancer, heart health, arthritis, exercise, socializing, diet

Councils supported immigrants and refugees moving to Canada through:

- Collected used clothing
- Drive them to Mass
- Donations of food made
- Hygiene products collected and dropped off at high school in the Falls with a large number of refugees

List any recommendations for improvements in policy, guidelines, or reporting related to the service pillar including identifying at what level of the League.

- Suggested break down for sub committees as this chair covers a great deal and we want to be on the same page, not different from Diocese to Diocese.
-

ONTARIO ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

DIOCESE: St. Catharines _____

of parishes responding 27 of 30

PILLAR: SOCIAL JUSTICE

LEADER: Sue Pellerin _____

The national annual survey did not include components specific to social justice. However, through the faith and service pillars the following social justice issues were addressed in some way:

- Refugees living in our region
- Ukraine – The war and refugees
- Women’s Health
- Recycling
- Environmental awareness

Councils monitored, studied, or acted upon the following federal(f)/provincial (p) bills:

- Bill C-39 Freedom of content law
- 314: MAID
- Ontario Health Coalition – citizen led referendum vote to stop privatization in our hospitals.
- Bill C-311 Violence Against Pregnant Women act
- Bill C-7 An act to amend the criminal code (medical assistance in dying)
- Bill C-230 An act to amend the criminal code (intimidation of health care professionals)
- Bill C-27 Artificial Intelligence Bills
- Bill 5 – 11 Civil Law Harmonization

Councils monitored, studied, or acted upon the following resolutions (national-n/provincial-p/diocesan-d/parish council-c):

- The Diocesan resolution on the Nativity Scene was supported in 2022. It was monitored for 2023 and with Monique Finora leading the way, we were able to again have it at City Hall. This is a continuing effort.

List any recommendations for improvements in policy, guidelines, or reporting related to the pillar of social justice including identifying at what level of the League.

- To be able to find what resolutions have been passed or presented on the National Website. Very difficult to find information.

ONTARIO ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

DIOCESE: St. Catharines _____

SECRETARY: Karen Hofstede

of parishes responding 27 of 30

RECORDING OF MINUTES

Varied from parish – some the president type, some the secretary
 Minutes sent by email, but for those who do not have, we have to wait for them to read at meeting for approval. Time consuming. More
 examples of minutes on the National website People
 hold this position without computer skills or a computer. This should not be.

COMMUNICATION

Satisfied with communication you receive:

Usually National 58%
 Provincial 39%
 Diocesan 73%

Always National 23%
 Provincial 27%
 Diocesan 23%

List any recommendations for improvement in policy, guidelines, or reporting related to the Secretary position including identifying at what level of the League.

- There is a lot more work behind the scenes and combining this with communication will be a great deal of work. Communication should be its own entity

ONTARIO ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

DIOCESE: St. Catharines_____

of parishes responding 27 of 30

PAST PRESIDENT: Frances Murdaca_____

The top 5 reasons parishes reported consulting the Past President were:

- Honour Guards
- Policy and Procedure
- Elections
- Questions about history book
- To help with events

Parishes (#) reported the following activities:

- Updated council archives 15__
- Shared a copy of a history book with national office 0__
- Displayed archived material (albums, minutes, etc) 15__
- Shared *Constitution & Bylaws* updates at a meeting 15__
- Updated policy and procedure in past two years 3__

List any recommendations for improvements in policy, guidelines, or reporting related to the Past President position including identifying at what level of the League.

- Nil

Annual Executive Reports

Here I am Lord, Send me

Diocesan Spiritual Advisor –
Fr. Richard Kowalchuk

Dear Sisters in the League:

Greetings in our Risen Lord! Liturgically, we are now in the midst of several weeks of celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Note carefully that the Season of Easter which commemorates this glorious event is 25% longer than the Season of Lent which focusses on penance and the suffering and death of Christ. Furthermore, the Church gifts us with a “reprieve” on the 4th Sunday of Lent known as Laetare Sunday. The reason for this should be clear. As Disciples of Christ, we rejoice in the fact that we are “Resurrection people.” No, we do not, nor can we dispense with the Cross, as our Saviour has taught us, but it is not there that we are to dwell. The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ is known as the Paschal Mystery and it is the divine process which we undergo over and over again throughout our Earthly lives. This process calls us to share Christ’s suffering and death all throughout life in order to continually share in His Rising to new life. This is the very meaning of this Season of Easter, the very meaning of our Christian lives and I wish to take a few minutes to share my life-changing experience of the Paschal Mystery this year.

Some of you know by now that these past four months, I have been on a break from pastoral ministry. As I was approaching 29 years of service in the Priesthood, in my 57th year, daily life had gone from difficult to unmanageable. The coping skills which had served me well over many years became ineffective and my former zeal for ministry was all but gone. I approached our Bishop with this dilemma and, true to form, he listened with great compassion and arranged for a stay in the Wellness Centre for Clergy and Religious north of Toronto. Some of you may have heard of this facility whose name is Southdown. Since 1965, thousands of priests and religious have entered the residential program and most often, have emerged renewed, with new personal insight and valuable tools to live and minister in a joyful, hope-filled way. I am grateful to say that I am among them.

As Ladies in the League, you know from personal experience that life puts all of us through our paces. I am fond of saying that “Life does not let us get away with anything.” When life wishes to teach us something, we can be sure the lesson will be repeated, perhaps more than once, if it did not get in the first time. Very often, we are our own worst enemies. Our individual personalities, upbringing, thought processes, wounds and scars, all bring a daily experience which is sometimes negative and unpleasant and even deeply troubling, depressing, anxiety-causing or despairing. Over these past four months, I had the blessed opportunity to delve into the uniqueness of my personality and to re-examine unhelpful or erroneous, unchallenged messages I had picked up along the way which had caused me to see life as something to “get through,” as opposed to the mystery and adventure it was intended to be.

The Wellness program I participated in, allowed me a substantial amount of time away from ministry, where I was helped to embrace more fully than ever before, the gift of life, along with the tools to move forward in a healthier, more purposeful manner. So, what did I learn that I may share which may be beneficial to you as you journey through life in light of the Paschal Mystery?

Firstly, although each of us is living in modern times, our cognitive and emotive faculties along with the functioning of our bodies, remain what they were since ancient times. The same priorities of mind and body remain what they have always been –survival and safety. This priority has served us well, resulting in the survival of the human race, the very reason you and I are able to be together here today. What differentiates human beings from the rest of the animal kingdom is that we have the faculty of thought and the power to reason. As a corporate body, humanity has been able to accomplish amazing feats through cooperation and teamwork. The emotion which has made this possible by keeping most of us in some conformity with accepted social standards is that of shame. Thus, shame is healthy and necessary. However, shame, as with everything in our world, has been tainted by sin, and thus does not always serve us as it is meant to. Each of us has felt this painful emotion and, if not well understood or managed, can keep us trapped or can be handled in a maladaptive way. So many of us lack adequate self-esteem and self-compassion. Even as people of faith, who have regularly heard of God's total and unconditional love for us, may continue to view ourselves in a harsh manner, believing that God's mercy, compassion and forgiveness applies to everyone but us. We can build a prison for ourselves without any way of opening the locked door. Sadness, discouragement and despair can set in. The good news is that this does not have to be the end of the story. As the adage goes, "When we are down to nothing, God is up to something!" Your Convention theme this year is: "You did it to me," taken from the Final Judgment scene in Matthew's Gospel. Recognizing our own need for security, love, belonging and freedom, we are called to do what is in our power to help others to meet these needs. Where one is in need of material support, we offer a helping hand. When another needs a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on, we respond. While practicing sufficient self-care, we as followers of Christ, referencing His supreme example of love and service, help our neighbour in need. The CWL has a rich heritage of sharing the love of Christ in so many ways at home and in the province and nation. This dynamic of concern for the neighbour is a hallmark of the League which will endure.

Our ever-faithful God has given us His Son to break the bonds of sin, to remove our shame and to put a definitive end to eternal death. Is life still waiting for you? It waits for us all. And, our God walks alongside us, picking us up and carrying us when needed. He has done that in my life numerous times, as I am sure He has in yours.

I want to close with words of gratitude for the prayers and support I have received from you, my League family, our compassionate and fatherly shepherd, Bishop Bergie, the team at Southdown, members of the clergy, my own family and above all to Almighty God. With Him by your side, you will live the Paschal Mystery over and over again, until that day when you are granted entrance into His glorious Kingdom.

Respectfully submitted, For God and Canada,
Fr. Richard Kowalchuk, Diocesan Spiritual Advisor

President
Lisa Fillingham

Isaiah 6:8 New King James Version

Also, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?"
Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

When I first heard the new theme from Shari Guinta at the National Convention I was thrilled. What better words can represent the Catholic Women's League on an everyday basis?

As I contemplated writing this report I thought of where the Lord has sent me, not knowing at the time. It may have been Wilma who convinced me to become a member but the journey I have taken within the CWL is guided by the Lord sending me. I believe many members are continually guided by these words while taking executive roles, leading groups and assisting wherever needed.

Here I am Lord, send me is the calling the executive heard when asked to serve at the end of a long pandemic while entering the precarious time of the new chair positions. The election list of candidates is long, but many did not want to take the role to lead the new chairs until more time was established. I understand wholeheartedly but for those who chose to take on the role, the Holy Spirit called them, and they answered.

Collectively the executive was called to an open, more collaborative group whose ideas were shared. We would start one way and end another way but from point A to Point B, everyone's thoughts were included. The Lord sent us to be open, try new ideas and new ways to do things. We put our faith in the Lord and his calling, and it worked better than we prayed it would. How Blessed we are!

Where will the Holy Spirit send me? To examine how I help and how I can do more or do things differently.

Where will the Lord send me? I will be sent to a new executive with a new theme driven by a strong leader who I will support.

Where will the Lord send me? I pray it sends me to my sisters in the league to flourish our relationships and enjoy times together.

Where will the Lord send me? I trust in our Lord and know he will call me for where he thinks I am needed.

I am confident that when you say, Here I am Lord, send me that you will rise to the occasion with Holy Spirit guiding you.

Thank you. Lisa Fillingham, Diocesan President

President Elect/Faith

Deedee Alexandre

“Here I Am Lord, Send Me” encapsulates the essence of what engaged members of the CWL experience both interiorly and exteriorly. When the interior is aligned with the exterior, there’s no stopping what a CWL member can accomplish!

As the Vice-President and Faith Chair for the past two years, I believe that I have been able to grow and demonstrate this phrase from Isaiah in three main areas: the introduction of the Catholic Connections newsletter, the new Annual Meeting of Members leadership model, and the Meet and Greet September gathering.

Interiorly and exteriorly, I have grown in directions that the Lord has designed. I have learned much about aspects of my faith when researching for articles to include in the monthly Catholic Connections. The Catholic Connections, I trust, has increased the members’ understanding of their faith and have provided an opportunity for the Council Presidents to submit and share what activities they are engaged in.

Firm in faith and having a vision, the St. Catharines Diocesan Council in 2023 implemented a new leadership structure to harness the leadership skills of women to plan the AMM. These ladies are recognizing and utilizing their strengths. The AMM was a fabulous success last year and this year, well, we’ll see!

Finally, introduced last year on September 8, Our Lady’s birthday, the “Happy New Year” / Meet and Greet was a marvelous success. Bishop Birgie gave all of us a blessing for the new CWL year. It is designed to be an evening of prayer, fellowship, food, and fun! We’re looking forward to the 2nd annual on September 6, 2024.

Of course, none of these initiatives would have been possible without the forward thinking of our President, Lisa Fillingham. Thank you, Lisa, for your four-year tenure.

Treasurer

Dina Marchionda

Most Reverend Bishop Gerard Bergie, Reverend Fathers,
Madam President, Diocesan Council, Life members, Guests
and sisters in the Catholic Women's League:

From the Treasurer's Annual Reports, 19 out of 30 parishes reported over \$68,000 in donations to the National Voluntary Fund, various Standing committees, donations to parishes, schools and other causes and organisations meaningful to councils. The ability to donate so generously is a direct result of the work that each council puts into creating awareness of the needs of not only their own parish and school community, but the unmet needs of the wider community. A good example of this is the response of our councils and their parishes to the needs of the influx of refugees in the Niagara Region. Housing, food, clothing, toiletries and furniture drives provided much needed basic items for those that have nothing.

Here I am Lord - Firstly, our sisters in the League have always opened themselves to the subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, nudges from the Holy Spirit to guide us in our efforts and endeavours.

Send me - Secondly, despite our personal limitations, we have always courageously stepped in and stepped up when we saw a need, injustice or affront to our faith.

Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything,

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Service – Here I am Lord, Send me

Diane Szydowski

Here I am Lord, send me is a strong belief I have with the work I have done with the Catholic Women's League. The opportunity to serve and help has been my guide through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The last years on Diocesan have enabled me to see how we can do more. Executive meetings with discussion about the chair you hold and what to look at for events, ideas and bettering the community guide me. How we encourage these endeavours and what we have done has been guided by a group of women with generosity of heart and soul.

The new pillar of service has changed. This has been a trying two years, learning, growing and understanding the changes. We have worked together and possibly to the naked eye the work may not be seen. We have started the foundation for the future executive councils. Here I am Lord, call me was not how I saw this choice to be on the Diocesan Council. However the Lord did call me to persevere, understand and grow to help the future service chairs. He did call me and I answered without knowing it at the time.

I encourage all those who do not feel the call at times, to take the chance. The call will grow stronger, your commitment will flourish and your love of the league will be evident in all you,

Thank you Lord, for sending me.

Social Justice

Sue Pellerin

How true it is that reflecting on the past is a whole new learning experience in itself!

The answer to “Here I am Lord, send me.” came in different forms. I was sent, or guided, or directed to many sources, all of which helped to flesh out, or expand, my understanding of service. First of all, there was the National website, where “Service” has been described as “Hands that share”. What a succinct was to phrase it! What I was soon to rediscover was that “sharing” had many forms.

Wanting to widen my understanding of service as it pertained to my role, I kept searching various sites, including the National and Provincial Facebook pages. I was inspired and appreciated the endeavors that different CWL councils posted, since I found them to be so varied and wide-reaching.

One aspect that stood out to me was the many instances of “sharing” that do not have a monetary value attached to it. They required our time, energy and talents. In my mind, these are more worthwhile since they involve an investment of ourselves. This is how individuals and councils address the corporal works of mercy.

Whether it is educating ourselves about the many ways to give, the plight of those in need around us and around the world or engaging in projects to assist, we share and we serve.

“Just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve” (Mt. 20:25).

In short, reflecting served to re-energize me and to re-commit myself to the call.

Thanks be to God!

Communications

Theresa Murphy

Sisters In Christ,

Where does the time go? Another year has flown by and there have been so many meaningful things planned and implemented by our local St Catharines CWL councils. It is my pleasure to be a part of all of this through my role as Communication Officer. How great is that? I get to share all of what you are doing with the world through our emails, website and facebook. It is so much fun trying to keep you all informed by sending out a million emails (at least it feels like that sometimes) that are important for our continued service for God,Community and Country.

Thank you for your patience with my errors on the email chain - keeping up electronically with all of the annual changes in leadership can be a challenge. As we continue moving forward: strategy in motion - please continue to send to your St. Catharines Executive, the stories and pictures of all that is happening at your local Council and Parish level. Be sure to regularly check us out at stcatharinescwl.ca. Also, remember to keep up with what is happening Provincially (cwl.on.ca) and Nationally (cwl.ca). How easy it is to let our fingers do the walking with google and open ourselves to the world of CWL which is always filled with 'holy moments' happening across our Diocese, Ontario or Canada. It has been a pleasure and honour to support our Diocesan CWL and local parishes through our website, facebook and email communication strategy.

Respectfully submitted

Theresa Murphy

Past President

Frances Murdaca

National Past President, Fran Lucas, wrote in a recent article in the League Magazine that *“as past presidents, we may be challenged with determining our role – where do we need to focus, what do we really want to do, what do we find most rewarding? We may even feel there isn’t much for us to do. Au contraire!”*

One of the main roles carried out by the Past President and Historian is to be of service to her Council in a consultative capacity. She makes herself available and willing to lend a helping hand....here I am Lord, send me, offering advice when asked and guiding members to be the best version of themselves.

This past year the process began of calling members to serve on our Diocesan Council for our upcoming 2024-2026 term through the Nominations and Elections Committee which is chaired by the Past President. Elections are an important time in the Council’s history to encourage competent and willing members come forward to serve in the League and continue to carry out the goods works being done for God and Canada.

Throughout her term the Past President has made herself available as a mentor to the members, encouraging them, nurturing and guiding them to reach important goals and bringing out their unique gifts and talents so that maybe one day they will be willing to let their names stand for election. Past Presidents and Historians can be described as the cheerleaders of the League, offering support and hope to the members and reminding them of the wonderful gift that the League is. We become companions for each other in our journey with the Lord.

As this report is being written, the Nominations and Elections Committee is in its final stage of work in having the next Diocesan Council Executive elected at the 2024 Annual Members Meeting this month. These women who have let their names stand have answered God’s call to serve in the League and continue our Lord’s work. They have responded “Here I am Lord, send me”.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Murdaca
Past President and Historian

Pin Recipients Report

Insignia Pins

Caroline Elisa Audet, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Sylvie DeSerres, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Laila Diaz, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Diana Ettinger, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Mary Michelle Loftus, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Christine Multer, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Laura Vazquez Orellana, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Jovita Pais, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Jacquie Kozina, Our Lady of the Scapular

Graciela Lamonato, Our Lady of the Scapular

Tommasina Abbruscato, Our Lady of the Scapular

Zaida Agbay, Sacred Heart

Margarita Cruz, Sacred Heart

Maggie Lim, Sacred Heart

Josie Mendoza, Sacred Heart

Adelinda Oliviera, Sacred Heart

Jessie Santos, Sacred Heart

Elizabeth D'Angelo, St. John Bosco

Liliana Agate, St. Joseph

Archea Alguno, St. Joseph

Angela Corrado, St. Joseph

Victoria Crispo, St. Joseph

Joan Kovacs, St. Joseph

Sylvia Laird, St. Joseph

Gabriella Laskowski, St. Joseph

Eileen Melnyck, St. Joseph
Karen Pryer, St. Joseph
Alex Adam, Star of the Sea
Brandy Allen, Star of the Sea
Elizabeth Cesar, Star of the Sea
Mariann Champion, Star of the Sea
Catrina Dutta, Star of the Sea
Courtney Huot, Star of the Sea
Denise Papaiz, Star of the Sea (Diocesan Executive)
Nicky Venditelli, Star of the Sea
Annet Alexander, Star of the Sea
Emily Mino, Star of the Sea

[5 Year Pin](#)

Esther Marcos, Our Lady of the Scapular
Lynn Orr, Our Lady of the Scapular
Brigette Schmidt, Our Lady of the Scapular
Melissa Kuczera, St. Alexander
Janet Nohara, St. Alexander
Janice Benvenuto, St. Mary of the Assumption
Karen Bertley, St. Mary of the Assumption
Jessie Clutterbuck, St. Mary of the Assumption
Christine DerNederanden, St. Mary of the Assumption
Gertrude Kilgour, St. Mary of the Assumption
Frances Kobe, St. Mary of the Assumption
Andrea DeGa, St. Mary of the Assumption
Jean Stephenson-Lucente, St. Mary of the Assumption
Linda Warkentin, St. Mary of the Assumption
Brandy Delaney, St. Vincent de Paul
Loretta LaVoie, St. Vincent de Paul

Rita Oreskovich, St. Vincent de Paul

Silvia Donatelli, St. Vincent de Paul

Carmela DeLuca, Star of the Sea

Debra Miller, Star of the Sea

Joanne Merritt, Star of the Sea

Victoria Taylor, Star of the Sea

Loretta Wolters, Star of the Sea

[10 Year Pin](#)

Fe Adralin, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Thelma Ongangco, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Gloria Ugarte, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Marion Abbott, Our Lady of the Scapular

Eileen Barbarino, Our Lady of the Scapular

Olga Bombassaro, Our Lady of the Scapular

Rebecca Carey, Our Lady of the Scapular

Collen Celli, Our Lady of the Scapular

Assunta Ciampa, Our Lady of the Scapular

Karen DeGiorgio, Our Lady of the Scapular

Sheila Deminaniuk, Our Lady of the Scapular

Thess Dulan, Our Lady of the Scapular

Aline Jack, Our Lady of the Scapular

Amy Jackson, Our Lady of the Scapular

Vikki King, Our Lady of the Scapular

Toby Lilley, Our Lady of the Scapular

Rosa Maiolo, Our Lady of the Scapular

Jane Narsansky, Our Lady of the Scapular

Darla O'Rourke, Our Lady of the Scapular

Rosemary Okafor, Our Lady of the Scapular

Debbie Pozzobon, Our Lady of the Scapular

Maria Soligo Bordin, Our Lady of the Scapular
Rita Vacca, Our Lady of the Scapular
Connie Venneri, Our Lady of the Scapular
Mable Barbisan, Sacred Heart
Anna Neill, Sacred Heart
Gerri Lasaga, Sacred Heart
Catherine Esposito, St. Alexander
Alice Harris, St. Alexander
Debbie Pine, St. Alexander (Diocesan Lead, Book of Life)
Joyce Fabbro, St. Helen
Elizabeth Herron, St. Helen
Sandra Van der Loos, St. Helen
Marietta Commisso, St. Joseph
Donna Hubber, St. Joseph
Marjorie Martin, St. Joseph
Ileana Fernandez, St. Joseph
Lee Crampton, St. Joseph
Cheryl Chambers, St. Kevin
Louise Cowan, St. Kevin
Carole Anderson, St. Mary of the Assumption
Mary Bittman, St. Mary of the Assumption
Lucille Forgeron - St. Mary of the Assumption
Kathleen Clohessy – St. Mary of the Assumption
Marisela Ponikvar, St. Mary of the Assumption
Theresa Schneider, St. Mary of the Assumption
Teresa Di Gregorio, St. Therese of Lisieux
Leah Gordon, St. Thomas Aquinas
Wanda Gregory, St. Thomas Aquinas
Bernadette Haimes, St. Thomas Aquinas
Pearl Peritalo, St. Thomas Aquinas (Convention Cmmittee)

Karen Rockx, St. Thomas More
Ruth deLaat, St. Vincent de Paul
Janice Thiessen, St. Vincent de Paul
Sandra Vanderkaay, St. Vincent de Paul
Anne Favero, Star of the Sea
Merlyn Johnston, Star of the Sea
Margaret Ford, Star of the Sea

[15 Year Pin](#)

Dagmar Thoms – The Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria
Una Davidos, Our Lady of the Scapular
Angelina Fiorucci, Our Lady of the Scapular
Francoise Hubley, St. Alexander
Sue Pellerin, St. Alexander (Diocesan Executive)
Anna Rocca, St. Alexander
Claire Rochette, St. Alexander
Betty VanZehl, St. Alexander
Barb Nolan, St. Helen
Clara Nolan, St. Helen
Piera Palmieri, St. Helen
Angie Sgambelluri, St. Helen
Brenda Coleman, St. Mary of the Assumption
Monique Franceschini, St. Mary of the Assumption
Christine Curran, St. Thomas More
Franca Lanigan, St. Thomas More
Antoinette McWhirter, St. Thomas More
Philomena Wilcox, St. Vincent de Paul
Sharon Healey, St. Vincent de Paul
Lisa Fillingham, Star of the Sea (Diocesan Executive)

20 Year Pin

Pat Girgenti, Our Lady of the Scapular (Convention Committee)

Erica Spreitzer, Our Lady of the Scapular

Paquerette Corriveau, St. Alexander

Maureen Keogh-Crandles, St. Alexander

Janet Koller, St. Alexander

Sharon Forgeron, St. Mary of the Assumption

Melissa Kachur, St. Mary of the Assumption

Veronica Campbell, St. Thomas Aquinas

Joan Vernon, St. Thomas Aquinas

Mary Lukezic, St. Vincent de Paul

Liz Cesar, Star of the Sea

Ann Monster, Star of the Sea

Celestina Stanziano, Star of the Sea

25 Year Pin

Emily Green, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Nancy Chmay, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Mary Teresa DeFavari Bak, Our Lady of the Scapular

Wanda Gora, Our Lady of the Scapular

Jennifer Porteous, Our Lady of the Scapular

Irene Ciszek, Our Lady of the Scapular

Liliane Degan, Sacred Heart

Joanne Kelly, Sacred Heart

Darlene Plyley, Sacred Heart

Marion Hoover, St. Alexander

Joy Dekker, St. John Bosco

Sherrie Kicinski, St. John Bosco

Annie Lafantasie, St. John Bosco

Carmella Marr, St. John Bosco

Dorothy Santarella, St. John Bosco
Shirley Brown, St. Kevin
Catherine Cahill, St. Kevin
Theresa McKay, St. Thomas More
Mary Fran Brunt, St. Vincent de Paul
Sally Harmer, St. Vincent de Paul
Helen Konik, St. Vincent de Paul
Moira Pakiyanayagam, Star of the Sea

[30 Year Pin](#)

Angelina Ciprian, St. Mary of the Assumption
Juliann Sliwa, St. Mary of the Assumption
Josephine Callaghan, St. Thomas Aquinas
Theresa Hough, St. Thomas Aquinas
Jean Jules, St. Thomas Aquinas
Donna Krupa, St. Thomas Aquinas
Dena Leblanc, St. Thomas Aquinas
Maria Luis, St. Thomas Aquinas
Rita McShane, St. Thomas Aquinas
Kate Michaud, St. Thomas Aquinas
Emily Murray, St. Thomas Aquinas
Maria Price, St. Thomas Aquinas
Lauretta Snejder, St. Thomas Aquinas
Leona Watson, St. Thomas Aquinas
Gloria Cukierski, St. Thomas More
Luigina DePoli, St. Vincent de Paul
Madeleine Corran, Star of the Sea
Sheila Fronk, Star of the Sea

[35 Year Pin](#)

Mary Anne Henderson, Our Lady of the Scapular

Anna Paroschy, St. Alexander

Marianne Allen, St. Mary of the Assumption

Pat Smith, St. Mary of the Assumption

Gloria Frenette, St. Thomas More

Marion Battersby, Star of the Sea

Theresa Barton, Star of the Sea

[40 Year Pin](#)

Louise Graffi, Our Lady of the Scapular

Isabelle Muracco, Sacred Heart

Joanne Mamolo, Sacred Heart

Julie Mein, Sacred Heart

Marg Hendry, Sacred Heart

Sue Berger, Sacred Heart

Pat Leaming, Sacred Heart

Kathleen Bruch, St. Helen

Maria Palmieri, St. Helen

Diane Szydlowski – St. Julia (Diocesan Executive)

Beverly Craig, St. Kevin

Anna Fiore, St. Kevin

Elaine O'Leary, St. Kevin

Ann Harris, St. Thomas More

Doreen Garneau, Star of the Sea

[45 Year Pin](#)

Margaret Smalyga, St. Alexander

Sharon Vedova, St. Alexander
Lynda Bertulli, St. Mary of the Assumption
Carol Handley, St. Mary of the Assumption
Toni TenDen, St. Mary of the Assumption
Shirley Tries, St. Thomas More
Jean Roberts, Star of the Sea

[50 Year Pin](#)

Florence Girhny, Sacred Heart
Dora Holubowsky, St. Helen
Mary Smeenk, St. Helen
Nellie VanDen Elzen, St. Helen
Ida Giancola, St. John Bosco
Carol Comer, St. Kevin
Barb Yaworski, Star of the Sea

[55 Year Pin](#)

Cesira Floriani, St. Mary of the Assumption
Helen Mearns, St. Mary of the Assumption
Anne Roscoe, St. Mary of the Assumption

[60 Year Pin](#)

Irene Albers, Sacred Heart
Carol Michitsch, Sacred Heart
Tina Vingerhoets, St. Therese of Lisieux
Mary Nan, St. Therese of Lisieux (Life Member)
Anne Burtnik, St. Thomas Aquinas

Heather Sherlock, St. Vincent de Paul

Sheila Peters, St. Vincent de Paul

Ida Marcellini, Star of the Sea

65 Year Pin

Seraphine Dowd, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Carmella Calaguero, Our Lady of the Scapular

Eleanor Summerville, Sacred Heart

Lena Petruzella, St. Alexander

Rita Ferri Morgan, St. John Bosco

Peggy Collins, St. Thomas Aquinas

Sheila Tierney, St. Vincent de Paul

Maya Guggenmoos, Star of the Sea

70 Year Pin

Trudy Ruitter, St. Alexander

Mary Fromberger, St. Kevin

75 Year Pin

Helen Antal, St. John Bosco

Phyllis Carter, Star of the Sea

Maple Leaf Service Pin

Christine Haymes, Sacred Heart

Deedee Alexandre, St. Alexandre (Diocesan Executive)

Mary Hendriks, St. Joseph

Angelia Vankralingen, Star of the Sea

Lorraine Urquhart, Star of the Sea

Anniversaries

St. Alfred of Rome – March 1st, 2023

70th Anniversary

Sacred Heart – March 10th, 2023

70th Anniversary

St. Julia October 7 th , 2023	55th Anniversary
St. Vincent de Paul October 14, 2023	100 th Anniversary
St. Mary/St. Ann October 15, 2023 –	70 th Anniversary
St. Mary of the Assumption October 23, 2023	100 th Anniversary

Membership Growth Awards

1 st Place – St. Julia	49%
2 nd Place – St. Thomas More	24%
3 rd Place – The Cathedral	10%

Congratulations to all Service Pin Recipients, Parish’s anniversary celebrations and membership growth awards.

Next year’s AMM will be Tuesday, April 8th at St. John Ukrainian Catholic Church, St. Catharines, On.

Lisa Fillingham
Diocesan President