



Catholic Women's League Diocese of St. Catharines



National CWL: cwl.ca
ON Provincial CWL: cwl.on.ca
St. Catharines CWL: stcatharinescwl.ca

Compiled & Edited by Deedee Alexandre

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CWL Diocesan Executive: 2024-2026

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President's Message



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

--April 19, 2026



I would like to take this opportunity to briefly thank everyone who has supported this tenure of the St. Catharines Diocesan Council and me personally. Thank you to Bishop Bergie, always our shepherd guiding us with care, concern, and wisdom. And to Father Richard for being the Diocesan Spiritual Advisor--deeply reverent but always the quick wit. And thank you to the Executive Council--Dina Marchionda, Denise Papaiz, Theresa Murphy, Sue Pellerin, Kate Montague, Janice Deslauriers, and Lisa Fillingham as well as the leads: Frances Murdaca, Lee Crampton, Lorrie MacKenzie, Syl Roach, and Debbie Pine. Thank you, ladies, a million times over for your honesty and diligence. And thank you, finally, to Parish Council Presidents for your leadership--you were always a joy to work with! And, of course, all the Sisters in the League, who made each decision and endeavour that much more motivating and inspiring. Thank you for all the work you do for your parish and for the Diocese. Keep on keeping on for the Glory of God.

After six years of compiling the Catholic Connections, this will be the final edition. It was a pleasure putting it together; thank you to Elizabeth Angotti and Katherine Kehoe for their assistance for the year. And thank you to everyone who contributed. This was a labour of love.

The new Diocesan Executive will be announced at the AMM on Tuesday, April 21. I wish them all the best as they embark on what will no doubt be one of the most meaningful experiences in their life. For sure, the last two years, engaging with so many of you has left an indelible mark on my heart. Thank you.

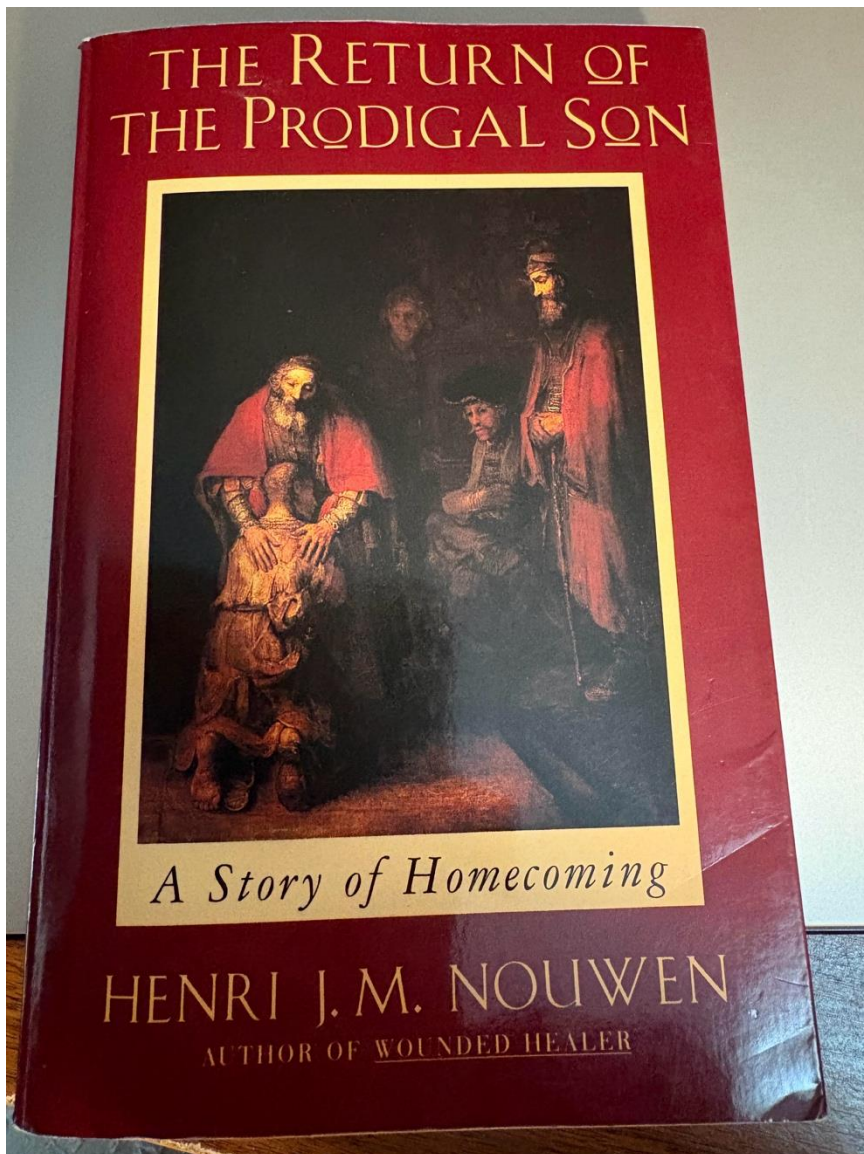
Deedee Alexandre--905-732-4782 deedecwl321@gmail.com

Coldest Night of the Year!



Betty Colaneri, Deedee Alexandre, Susan Venditti, Jacquie Kozina, Franca Ingribelli, Wilma Vanderzwaag, Syl Roach, and Mr. Roach.

Across Canada, on February 28, the Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) took place. And one of the local places that held this event was the Pen Centre--with the option to walk indoors or outdoors. The Diocesan Council had nine walkers participate and raised a total of \$9,083.00! On February 28, and for a week afterward, we were in first place! Then, the second-place competitor received a donation of \$10,000! Congrats to them! St. Julia Parish in St. Catharines also participated, and their 19 walkers raised \$3,015.00! From the St. Catharines CWL, a total of \$12,098 was raised for this very special local social agency: Start Me Up Niagara.



Book Study Starting!

Saturday, April 25

11 a.m. on Zoom

We all know the famous parable. We've all seen Rembrandt's reproduction of the parable. Father Henri Nouwen takes us on a remarkable journey that will be sure to transform your interior and exterior self. Trust this wonderful process of identity, revenge, and love.

Deedee's contact info:

deedeecwl321@gmail.com

text/phone: 905-732-4782

If you are interested in joining **this 6-week book study**,

- please contact Deedee by **Thursday, April 23** so she can send you the Zoom link
- please read pages 1-23 for Saturday, April 25
- anyone over 18 can join this book study--male/female, Catholic/non-Catholic

I hope you find this article by Garth Brown interesting.

The answer to our housing crisis is right in our own backyard!

It was February 2013. Beatrice (her real name) and her daughter were escaping an abusive relationship and had been living in a women's shelter supported by an agency in Halton Region. When I handed Beatrice the keys to their new home providing them the safety and security they both needed to begin a new life their relief was evident in their eyes, their posture and their tears. The home was also affordable thanks to a rent subsidy provided by Halton Region that would adjust over time. They would pay no more than 30% of their household income and the Region would 'top up' the balance.

That was the day that changed their lives. It also changed mine.

"So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."

James 2 14-26

Background: Since 2011 I had been volunteering with Halton Multicultural Council on their Transitional Housing Committee. Every 3 or 4 months a groups of 5 volunteers would meet when one of HMC's 11 apartments was about to become vacant as the residing family 'graduated' to a market-rent home. Our team was tasked to choose the family that we felt was ideal for the unit from the 12-15 applicants. The families not chosen would go back on the Region's housing wait list which at that time was more than 3,100 households...a 50% increase from the previous year!

One day, after selecting one family and consequently rejecting the others, my wife and I decided to create two more homes. We purchased a small bungalow in Burlington, moved a family into the three bedroom main floor the day we got possession and then embarked to create a two-bedroom legal secondary suite in the lower level of the home for a second family. Five months later we welcomed Beatrice and her daughter into their new home!

Yes, we invested in real estate but more importantly we invested in people!

The solution to our housing crisis was (and still is) so simple! Create the required new homes within existing properties...save the farm fields and greenbelt, avoid the cost of purchasing land and gently densify the number of people benefiting from the existing infrastructure and community services such as transit, schools, community centres, retailers and services. And as a result, build more vibrant neighbourhoods for people of all ages, backgrounds and incomes to co-exist and thrive! Neighbours were so supportive when they heard what we were doing. One neighbour even offered to plant flowers and evergreens in the front yard and others became close friends with the new residents!

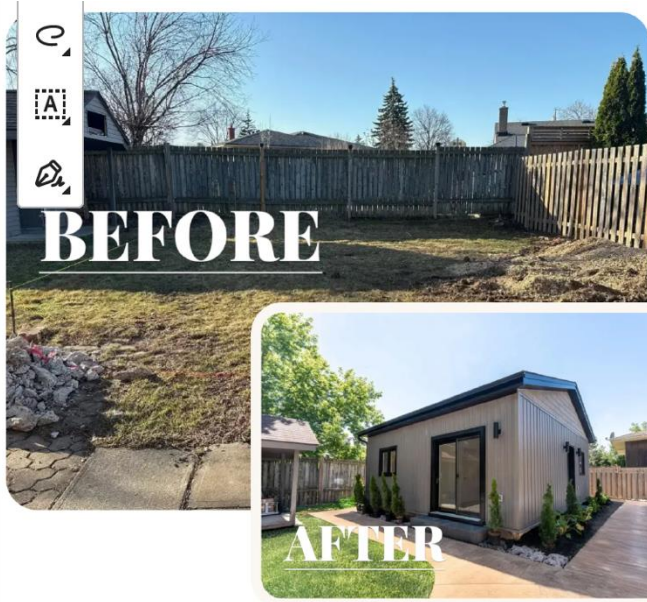
That experience was the catalyst which motivated me to promote the concept to seniors groups, faith groups, real estate investors and other interested audiences. Over the next decade I built several legal 'accessory dwelling units' (ADU's). Many of these homes provided housing for single mom's like Beatrice whose families benefitted from the rent subsidies and the support and outreach of agencies. Some of these homes were created for family members of the homeowner to answer their need for affordable housing. And other apartments were created for market rent housing, caregivers, and other needs unique to every homeowner or investor. One couple bought three homes and created 6 units all for families from the housing what list. While they continued to invest in the stock market, they candidly shared that these homes were the best investment they ever made because it helped so many people move forward with their lives!



Examples of apartments built over the past decade

So here we are in 2026! The ADU allowances in every municipality across Ontario all of Canada have expanded to allow detached homes in backyards, additions to your principal residence, garage conversions, laneway suites and so many other options! Some of these detached homes can be 850 square feet or larger!

Sadly, wait lists for affordable housing in every community have skyrocketed. Halton Region is now more than 8,000 households, The city of Toronto is over 100,000 households and Niagara Region, which had a wait list 5,500 back when Halton Region was 3,100, is now a staggering 12,135 households*. In Niagara Region wait times for housing is anywhere from 4 to 21 years as found [here](#).



An empty backyard converted to a new home!



A detached ADU ready for two separate homes

It takes a village!

The great news in Niagara Region is that every municipality has stepped up to enhance ADU options for all homeowners. And every homeowner of a detached, semi-detached and even townhome can build one or more legal ADU's on their property! St. Catharines just announced the return of their ADU incentive program which covers 70% of the cost to build each unit up to \$40,000 for an internal unit and up to \$80,000 for an external (detached) unit! Details of this incentive can be found [here](#).

Many older homeowners are considering these new 'backyard homes' as their next chapter of housing with ground floor access, custom designed interiors which can be mobility-friendly and provide lots of natural light! These homeowners can 'age in place' in the same neighbourhood they have enjoyed for decades, stay close to their family, friends and doctors while renting out the principal residence! Having other individuals or families living on your property also provides added vigilance and security as well as help with lawn cutting, snow clearing, gardening and other duties.

Other homeowners are considering these new units for their aging parents, adult children and, once we introduce the need for homes for single mothers and other households in need, the possibility of helping women like Beatrice move forward with their lives!

The investment in one or more ADU's on your property increases the equity of your property dollar for dollar based on how major banks and other lenders are now appraising the value of these new homes. And the significant monthly rental income provides cash flow for your other financial needs or desires (travel, etc.).

In 2025 my wife and I co-founded a social enterprise called Mary's Ark to help homeowners assess their current and future housing needs; explore what ADU options are available on their property and what incentives they can benefit from; and then introduce them to qualified contractors with a proven record of getting these new homes built on time and on budget. While most of the homeowners we meet with are focused on the housing need for themselves and their families, it is heartening to see how many also consider what their property can do to serve the community as well! It truly takes a village!

Recently Mary's Ark has aligned with agencies like Halton Women's Place and Home Suite Hope to support the 'Haven to Home' program which encourages homeowners in Halton Region to build a detached home for one of the families these fine agencies serve.

In Niagara Region we have had preliminary discussions with Niagara Region housing managers and Gillian's Place staff. We look forward to exploring this proven housing strategy with other

organizations in the Coalition to End Violence Against Women. A legal secondary suite on your property could be a life-changing start for women and their children or other households in need!

We welcome an opportunity to discuss your current and future needs and the needs of your family, friends and your community to discover what housing solutions exist on your property. Please visit our [website](#), email us at inquiries@marysark.org or call us at 1-844-342-5489. Our phone consultation is absolutely free and the result could be priceless!

By the way, Beatrice and her daughter are doing very well today! Thanks to her skills and fortitude, Beatrice secured a full-time job where she still works over a decade later. Because of her employment they transitioned out of the subsidized apartment into market-rent housing within a year. Her daughter is now enrolled in a college program.

Let's evolve from charity to social justice and create the lasting change we want to see together. We look forward to speaking with you!

*Niagara Region Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Update 2024 Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee Report date: Tuesday, September 9, 2025

“...is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house”

Isaiah 58:7

Addendum:

The need for housing stock is vast. While 95% of households on the housing wait lists across the country are capable of living in ADU's described above, a subset of the population requires accommodations that are deeply affordable and/or provide supports for their day-to-day needs.

- 1) Since 1990 I have operated abstinence-based congregate living homes for men and women coming out of shelters, encampments, their cars and other harsh realities. Should you have an interest in exploring congregate homes of this nature in Niagara Region I welcome your inquiry.
- 2) Another subset of the homeless population requires intensive supports due to mental health and addiction issues. These individuals require supportive housing. Fortunately Gillian's Place and other CEVAW organizations along with Indwell, Good Shepherd, Wesley and others are doing wonderful work in this field. We are happy to introduce you to their leadership teams if you have an interest in this model.
- 3) Faith leaders are assessing their property/properties to determine if they can play a role in creating housing to meet today's needs and create revenue streams to make the projects thrive. We welcome your inquiry should you know of a property that could be considered for housing.

Author: Garth Brown is a housing advocate and an affordable housing solutions consultant. Beyond his personal work he is a member of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul National Housing Committee and a co-chair of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Faith

Network steering committee. He can be reached directly at 416-459-2730 or garthbrown@marysark.org.



Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Catholic Women's League

God Bless
"a day and night thought"



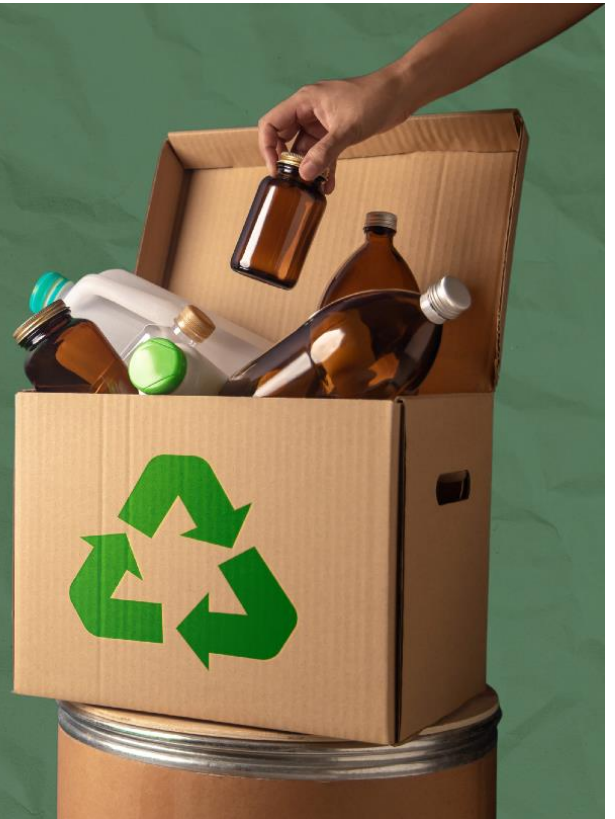
Happy 100th Birthday!
May 21, 2026



Just in time for Earth Day!

REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE

with Anna Sabucco



What My Mother Taught Me

Remembering – Reframing – Renewing

- *Paper bags were folded and saved
- *Leftover used creatively, expected and respected
- *Clothes were mended patches and not discarded
- *Jars and containers reused

Remembering is something I do often at this stage of my life. I find myself wondering-how many pictures should I keep? Instead of throwing them away or leaving them for my children, who may not recognize the people in them, I have learned to scan each photo add it to my own story. That way, the next generation can remember, preserve, and reuse these memories for years to come. Some photos I have also reframed, adding titles on the back of each frame so their meaning is never lost. I've even taken time to renew and reframe the medals of honor that belonged to my husband's father, preserving his legacy with care and respect.

This has become my major project- capturing memories and giving them new life.



T-T-T Stand For



Time- make space for God

Talent- use our God's gifts to service others

Treasures- transforming possessions into acts of love

Reminder Lenten Retreat 2026

Guest speaker Father Patrick Gilmur
ray

"Stewardship of the Spiritual Weapons"

Ways the Sabucco's Reduce

Eggs Shells



Rinse and crush them, then add them to your garden soil to provide natural minerals like calcium and help plants grow stronger

Used/Old Batteries



Store them safely and take them to a proper recycling center so they can be used them foe new product.

Old Bar Soaps



Collect small leftover pieces, melt them down, and combine them to create a new, usable bar of soap



HEARTS *on* FIRE

CATHOLIC CONFERENCE FOR BOTH YOUTH AND ADULTS



"I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!"
Luke 12:49

SAT MAY 9 | 8:30AM - 3:15PM

145 Livingstone Ave, Grimsby, ON

FEATURING:

BLESSED TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL



CHRIS BRAY! (with other Dynamic Clergy and Ministry Leaders)

Inspirational Catholic speaker and award winning Christian musician
with numerous #1 hit songs on Christian radio in Canada!

**Tickets on
Eventbrite [click here](#)**



Eucharistic Adoration

Praise & Worship Music

Exciting Youth Program

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Catholic Vendor Market

Holy Mass

Light lunch included!

Prayer of St. Gertrude the Great

A prayer which would release 1,000 souls from Purgatory each time it is said. Let's try to make a point of saying this prayer each day.

**“Eternal Father, I offer You
the most precious blood of Your
Divine Son, Jesus, in union
with the Masses said throughout the
world today, for all the
Holy Souls in Purgatory,
for sinners everywhere, for
sinners in the universal church,
those in my own home and
within my family. Amen.”**



The 8+8+8 Rule

Distribute your day (**24 hrs**) into **8+8+8 hrs** to make a **good balance sheet** of your life.

- **8 hrs** of hard work,
- 8 hrs of **good sleep** and
- **8 hrs** should be spent on (**3Fs, 3Hs, & 3Ss**)

👉 **3Fs** are family, friends, and faith.

👉 **3Hs** are health, hygiene, and hobby.

👉 **3Ss** are soul, service, and smile.

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**



