



**CWL**

**St. Catharines Diocese**

**Thursday, June 1, 2023**



## **CWL Catholic Connections**

**National CWL:** [cwl.ca](http://cwl.ca)

**ON Provincial CWL:** [cwl.on.ca](http://cwl.on.ca)

**St. Catharines CWL:** [stcatharinescwl.ca](http://stcatharinescwl.ca)

**CWL  
President's Message**

Everyone counts the days until summer arrives; warm weather, children home, gardening and enjoying the sunshine. We get so wrapped up in this pleasurable time that we forget that we have all this because of Our Lord. Without God, there would not be sunshine and happiness but darkness and gloom. Every wonderful thing we celebrate and enjoy is because of God and in our faith. So when we are happy, please remember to thank God for all that we have. God is our rock through hard times and he is also the rock of all things good. Let's never forget that.

Lisa Fillingham

St. Catharines CWL Diocesan President

## Messages From **Deedee Alexandre:**

Only in eternity shall we see the beauty of the soul, and only then shall we realize what great things were accomplished by interior suffering.—Mother Angelica

### Dear Ladies!

The first **Annual Meet and Greet/Happy New Year**

**Blessing** will take

place on **Friday,**

**September 8—5:30**

**p.m. at St. John's**

**Ukrainian Church --**

**91 Lakeshore Road,**

**St. Catharines.**



**Council Presidents:**

please reserve and pay

for the **advanced tickets** by **August 25.** Each advanced ticket is \$20.00—there will be a **limited number** of tickets at the door. **Don't be disappointed!**

**Also: Council Presidents**—please wear a **tiara or crown!**

**You can purchase one at the dollar store or on**

**Amazon!**

**Any Questions?** Call **Deedee Alexandre** at 905-732-4782!

St. Catharines Diocese  
**Catholic Women's League**

**Come Celebrate the  
CWL "New Year"!!!**

**Meet and Greet!!!**

**Join Us!!!**

**Pierogies, Chicken, and Salad**

**Cash Bar**

**\$20.00—advance tickets**

**\$25.00—limited tickets at the door-cash**

**Friday, September 8, 2023**

**St. John's Ukrainian Church--91 Lakeshore, St. Catharines**

**Doors Open at 5:30 p.m.**

**Bishop Bergie will give the  
"New Year's" Blessing!**

**Register with your Council President by August 25<sup>th</sup>**

Please send cheque (CWL St. Catharines) to Dina Marchionda:  
8739 Milomir Street, Niagara Falls, ON L2H 0A7

**See you there!**

## St. Kevin's

The St. Kevin's Catholic Women's League facilitated a session at St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church in May with Fr. Jerry Lazoryk. Fr. Jerry spoke of the history of the church and the Greek Orthodox religion and compared both the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic rites and practices. Fr. Jerry also took us behind the Royal Door into the Sanctuary to explain all the prayers and consecration procedures. We had 24 ladies in attendance from various parishes who were not only educated but also entertained by Fr. Jerry. After the session we all went out to break bread together and share lunch with Fr. Jerry.

At the final meeting in May, after the Crowning Mass, the ladies gathered and took part in the Kindness Rock Project. The ladies chose words of inspiration to paint on the rocks and then decorated the rocks with bright colours and fancy designs. The rocks were then placed at various retirement and long term care homes in Welland to brighten the days of residents, visitors, and staff. God bless our ladies and my He shine upon them until we meet again in the fall.





Lorrie Rokoss, Bette Ann Gregory, Gemma Crescenzi



Teresa Havran, Ann Libertini, Elvie Naphin



Helen Sivak, Anne Marie Ortenzi, Andrea Fortier

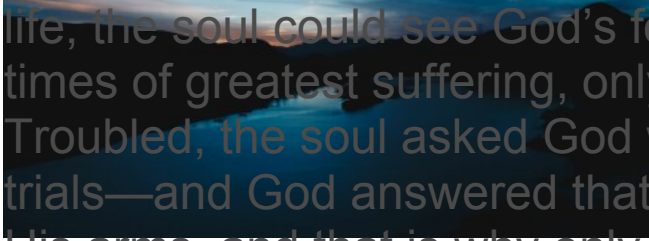


Respectfully submitted,  
Lorrie MacKenzie

## What is the “dark night of the soul”?

The Catholic Company—May 10, 2023

Do you remember the allegorical story of the soul who looked back on its life, seeing it like footprints in the sand? Through most of its



life, the soul could see God's footprints beside its own, but at the times of greatest suffering, only one pair of footprints were visible. Troubled, the soul asked God why He abandoned it during its trials—and God answered that at those times, He carried the soul in His arms, and that is why only one set of footprints marked the sand.

The “dark night of the soul” is a bit like this story: the soul experiences isolation from every source of comfort, whether in the world or at prayer. Even spiritual practices—once so beloved to it—bring no comfort or consolation and no sense of God's presence. The soul feels as though it is cut off from God and yet, all the while, God is carrying it even closer to His Heart.

The spiritual writers—Carmelite mystic St. John of the Cross, for example—distinguish two kinds of “night”: the active and the passive. In the “active night,” the soul is prompted to purge the senses with God's help. Fixing its focus on God alone, the soul actively works to remove itself from all worldly and physical distractions. This purgation is more complete and intense than the daily battle to overcome various failings and temptations—the “active night” entails a soul's total abandonment to cleansing every faulty area at once.

Sometimes, however, God steps in and plunges a soul into the “passive night”: the night that takes a soul entirely by surprise and which it has no control over. This trial is usually reserved for those who are most advanced in closeness to God. It is the final breaking-off of all that is not God, both spiritual and physical.

The dark night of the soul is such a great trial that God only permits the experience to souls who are greatly advanced in holiness. Many Catholics experience great crosses or dryness in prayer and feel far from God and *think* they are experiencing the dark night of the soul, but most of the time, they are simply experiencing a *purification* that is crucial for the **earlier stages** of the spiritual life. It's not the dark night itself.

Prayer is our greatest strength in times of both spiritual consolation and aridity.

## **What are the 12 promises of the Sacred Heart?**

You've probably read them before, but—during this month of the Sacred Heart—let's review the magnificent promises of Our Lord to those devoted to His Heart!



*Sacred Heart of Jesus with Saint Ignatius of Loyola and Saint Aloysius Gonzaga by José de Páez*

Revealed to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the 17th century, these promises show us in no uncertain terms just how much Our Lord desires that we devote ourselves to His loving Heart.

For those who do, He promised:

1. I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.
2. I will establish peace in their homes.
3. I will comfort them in all their afflictions.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all, in death.
5. I will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.
6. Sinners will find in my Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Lukewarm souls shall become fervent.



8. Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.
9. I will bless every place in which an image of my Heart is exposed and honored.
10. I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
11. Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in my Heart.
12. I promise you in the excessive mercy of my Heart that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays in nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments. My divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

The twelfth promise refers to the First Friday devotion—a very easy way to insert devotion to the Sacred Heart into our monthly routines. All we have to do is receive Holy Communion on nine consecutive First Fridays (ensuring we go to Confession beforehand if we are not in a state of grace), offering these Communions in reparation for the sins committed against the Sacred Heart.

There are many other additional, daily ways to place ourselves in the Heart of Christ. A simple thought of love and affection means so much to Him. “Jesus, I trust in You!” or “Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!” are other little prayers we can offer to more firmly bind ourselves to this Heart that loves us so much.

## **Fr. Mike Schmitz’s thoughts on Confession brought us to tears**



Ascension Presents | Fair Use via YouTube

[J-P Mauro](#) - published on 05/21/23

***Fr. Mike Schmitz illuminates the beauty of the Catholic sacrament of Confession, weaving personal reflections into his explanations of the faith.***

There are far too few natural orators in the world who can match Fr. Mike Schmitz. For years, and long before he ever began the “Bible in a Year” and “Catechism in a Year” podcasts that launched him to international fame, **Fr. Mike has been producing videos that speak to the heart of Catholicism in conversational tones everyone can understand.** His ruminative reflections routinely leave us with new perspectives that enrich our understanding of the faith, while opening avenues of thought we’d never considered.

There may be no finer example of this than his video titled, “Confession Is a Place of Victory,” released on the Ascension Presents YouTube channel, in 2020. **Everything about this video is beautiful: from the Catholic musings Fr. Mike expresses, to the impeccably lit church in which he stands, and even the finely animated artistic renderings peppered throughout.**

The video answers the question, “**What is the priest thinking when you make your confession,**” but Fr. Mike gives us a whole lot more to think about, in just eight minutes.

Fr. Mike effortlessly weaves his own experiences into his explanation, which keeps the viewer engaged with the personal touch. He opens up with a story of his conversation with a woman who suggested that it must be hard for a priest to hear confessions, spending hours confronted with the sins of his congregants. However, **Fr. Mike disagreed explaining that he has found the confessional to be one of the most joyful, humbling, and inspiring places to be.**

He said that there are three things that he sees when he hears confessions, and the first is “the costly mercy of God in action.”

“There are so many people who go through their entire lives and they’ve never encountered the reality of God’s love that he gave to us through the Cross. But in Confession, I see people who are discouraged who are lifted up, I see people who are wounded who are healed, I see people who are lost who are found, and I get to see that every single day.”

Fr. Schmitz continued that the second thing he sees is “people who are trying.”

“Whenever someone walks through that confessional door, I don’t care if it’s their third confession that week, I see someone who has not given up. It

is so encouraging and inspiring. It is not a place of discouragement or a place of failure. Sin is the place of failure, but going into Confession and saying ‘I’m not going to give up on the God who won’t give up on me.’ That’s a place of victory, and again, I get to see that every day.”

Here he briefly touches upon whether or not a priest remembers what is said in the confessional. Fr. Mike states simply “basically no.” **He elucidates that sins are the equivalent of garbage and he humbly compares the priest to “God’s garbageman.”** He notes that one does not often see a garbage man sifting through the trash as though it’s interesting, rather they toss it into the truck and move on.

Finally we reach the third thing that Fr. Mike sees when he hears Confession: “My own heart.”

“I can’t tell you how often I am absolutely humbled when I hear someone come to Confession and they recognize something in their life that I have never recognized in mine, but it’s there. It’s a really amazing and humbling examination of conscience, because it reveals my heart. It reveals the heart of a priest.”

All of these incredible Catholic reflections only take us about halfway through the video. **It’s hard for a transcription to capture just what makes Fr. Mike’s talk so touching, as it’s a product of his earnest and genuine speaking tones, and his excited, approachable expressions as he explores Catholic thought.** We can’t recommend strongly enough that every Catholic should watch videos from Fr. Mike Schmitz for their ability to strike a spark and ignite our faith to burn brighter than ever.

[https://aleteia.org/2023/05/21/fr-mike-schmitzs-thoughts-on-confession-brought-us-to-tears/?utm\\_campaign=EM-EN-](https://aleteia.org/2023/05/21/fr-mike-schmitzs-thoughts-on-confession-brought-us-to-tears/?utm_campaign=EM-EN-)

[Newsletter-Daily-  
&utm\\_content=Newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=endgrid&utm\\_term=20230522](mailto:Newsletter-Daily-?utm_content=Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_source=endgrid&utm_term=20230522)

## St. Vincent de Paul

### 100 SCARVES

The St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Women's League of Niagara-on-the-Lake will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October, 2023. We hoped that this small project of making 100 SCARVES would help to celebrate our theme of "Caring and Sharing" over the last 100 years. Our dedicated crafters have made more than 200 scarves. Many were donated in February to help with the Out of the Cold programs. Our group is now also making prayer shawls and lap blankets. We look forward to continuing our sessions in the fall as we prepare for the cold weather.



—Sabina Knight, President



# As artificial intelligence concerns



**grow,  
there's  
hope for  
the future**

*Theresa Civantos Barber -  
published on 05/22/23*

***As scientists sound the alarm about artificial intelligence, what are the real dangers? And what does this mean for us?***

Artificial intelligence (AI) used to be nothing more than the stuff of wildly creative science fiction.

If we did imagine such a thing, we pictured benign and helpful AI like sweet R2-D2 from *Star Wars*.

But as time went on and AI began to be a real possibility, there were darker forebodings. For example, the murderous villains of *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Ex Machina* are a computer and robot who gain sentience.

Now, in news so strange that it seems to have come from a science-fiction novel, **developers of artificial intelligence are speaking out with concerns and calling for tighter laws and restrictions.**

A recent New York Times article, ‘The blares a warning signal about what could come’.

**But what exactly *are* the dangers of artificial intelligence?** So much of the commentary is long on fear mongering but short on practical details.

**And how worried do we need to be?**

Let’s take a closer look.

### **The dangers of AI**

Artificial intelligence poses three main risks:

- Disinformation in the short term
- Job loss in the medium term
- Loss of control in the long term

The biggest concern is disinformation, which is already a problem. “There is no guarantee that these systems will be correct on any task you give them,” one researcher told The New York Times, and there’s no way to tell what’s real and what’s fake.

Job loss is the next most pressing issue. An estimated 80% of the U.S. workforce could have at least 10% of their work tasks affected, and 19% of workers might see at least 50% of their tasks impacted.

Loss of control is a fairly distant possibility at this point, but it’s concerning enough that it’s come up a lot in the flurry of coverage.

### **Hope for the future**

Pope Francis spoke about these concerns in 2019. His response is helpful to understand these issues from a Catholic perspective.



He pointed out that job replacement might not always be bad news:

[Robots in the workplace] could put an end to certain arduous, risky, and repetitive types of work – that emerged, for instance, at the start of the industrial revolution in the 19th century – which often cause suffering, boredom, and exhaustion.

But disinformation might be the most serious and pressing concern. He said,

It is possible, as never before, to circulate tendentious opinions and false data that could poison public debates and even manipulate the opinions of millions of people, to the point of endangering the very institutions that guarantee peaceful civil coexistence.

In a worst-case scenario, AI-generated disinformation could lead to a future of online distrust. We may see a world in which we can trust very little that we see on our screens.

### **The flip side**

But the flipside to that? **What we do in the real world has never been more important.**

The more technology becomes dangerous, the more we need to be deeply rooted in our physical reality and our local communities. **We desperately need real people and things around us that we can rely on and trust.**

Ultimately, there is very little that you and I can do about the future of AI, which is in a few very powerful hands.

This news might be our wake-up call to embrace a “real world” lifestyle, connecting tangibly and in person with other people, and putting less time and attention into the online world.

But that only carries us so far. After all, most of us won't give up screens completely.

**We can find inspiration in the example of saints** such as Blessed Carlo Acutis, who enjoyed technology and appreciated it, while not letting it have power over him. **Technology harnessed by moral standards is an immense force for good.**

So most of all, we can hope and pray that those in power follow Pope Francis' advice:

A better world is possible thanks to technological progress, if this is accompanied by an ethic inspired by a vision of the common good, an ethic of freedom, responsibility, and fraternity, capable of fostering the full development of people in relation to others and to the whole of creation.

**Cana gives us a claim on Mary**



Dennis Jarvis | CC BY SA 2.0

[Fr. Peter John Cameron, OP](#) - published on 05/21/23

***The Blessed Virgin Mary takes the initiative on her own, acting decisively to ensure optimal happiness for others.***

Just how we can expect to benefit through prayerful reliance on the Blessed Virgin Mary is revealed at the wedding feast of Cana ([Jn 2:1-12](#)). There, Our Lady — sensitive to the wants of the wedding guests, solicitous to potential sorrow, and in service to those in need — mediates with her divine Son.

At Cana, nobody asks the Mother of God to intervene. The Blessed Virgin Mary takes the initiative on her own, acting decisively to ensure optimal happiness for others. Dante hails this always-other-directed grace of Our Lady in *The Divine Comedy*: “O Virgin Mother, your loving kindness not

only comes to the aid of those who ask for it but very often spontaneously precedes the request for it” (Canto XXXIII).

Cana actually gives us a *claim* on Mary. As Bishop J.-B. Bossuet (+1704) stresses: “The great point for us to remember, as the solid ground of our devotion, is that Mary’s power with Our Lord *remains the same* now that it was during his life on earth.” And what a power it is: “The prayers of all these who cry out of whatever tribulation she gladly receives and, making supplication to her Son, in her pity she turns from them every evil. For just as wax melts at the touch of fire and as ice melts in the heat of the sun, so the army of her foes perishes *before her face* and at her bidding nothing hostile stands” (Bishop Amadeus of Lausanne +1159).

Let us dare to follow the superb counsel of Abbot Adam of Perseigne (+1221):

If you stand in need of mercy, it is found in full measure in the heart of the Virgin. If your faith is shaken by an assault from an enemy, turn your eyes upon the Virgin and what was wavering will be firmly fixed. If the lust of the flesh tempts you, turn your gaze upon the Virgin, and the danger to your chastity will be removed. If pride disturbs your spirit, gaze upon the Virgin, and by the merit of her humility your swelling spirit will subside. If you are set on fire by anger’s torches, lift your eyes to the Virgin and you will grow gentle through her calm. In every peril the goodness of the Virgin comes to succor. From her fullness the sum total of graces flows.

## **St. Julia**

Service Pin recipients—and Father Greg Schmidt—Our Lady of Good Council—April 26.





*St. Julia's longest-standing CWL members: left to right--Kathleen Masse--50 years; Lillian Salfi--55 years; Claire Boudreau--60 years; absent: Betty Coholan--65 years!*

Sincerely, Mary Joel Modolo—President





*Reaffirmation of the Diocesan Executive: Deedee Alexandre, Theresa Murphy, Frances Murdaca, Father Richard, Lisa Fillingham, Dina Marchionda, and Diane Szydowski*

**The 66<sup>th</sup> AMM will be Tuesday, April 23, 2024!!!**

**Passed Away:**

- a) Catherine Mindorff Facca**—May 9, 2023—St. Michael, Fort Erie; 21 years of service
- b) Soma Perera**—May 20, 2023—Our Lady of the Scapular; 46 years of service
- c) Ann Csele**—May 23, 2023—St. Kevin; 46 years of service
- d) Grace Cronier**—May 22, 2023—St. Kevin; 35 years of service
- e) Theresa Wilson**—May 24, 2023—Star of the Sea; 34 years of service
- f) Doris Konst**—May 27, 2023—St. Catherine of Alexandria; 22 years of service
- g) Joan Rogala**—May 27, 2023—St. Michael, Fort Erie; 46 years of service
- h) Mary Cullen**—June 12, 2023—St. Catherine of Alexandria—37 years of service

**keep scrolling!**







ST. CATHARINES DIOCESE

## Blankets for the needy

by LAURIE BURLEY

Warm Up Canada was started in 1993 from an idea that originated in the United States called Warm Up America. I felt we could do the same for Canadian people in need by knitting 9" x 12" blocks and sewing 36 blocks together to make a 54" x 72" blanket large enough to wrap around the homeless people who have to sleep outside in the cold.

The idea was first presented to St. Patrick's CWL and the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Caledonia. Since I don't knit, I needed sample blocks, which came from the St. Vincent de Paul ladies in Dunnville.

With the help of an article in the *Hamilton Spectator*, many people called and wanted to get involved in this worthwhile program. Flyers were sent out and with announcements in the church bulletins, the blocks started to come in. It was the first indication this was to be an on-going project.

The first year we delivered 23 blankets to the

Good Shepherd Centre. I was delighted! When other church groups, senior citizen homes, as well as many individuals became involved by knitting and sewing blocks together, donating yarn, and being drop-off centres, the program grew.

This year we delivered 316 blankets to the centres who help the homeless and less fortunate in our area—The Good Shepherd Centre, Wesley Urban Ministries, St. Matthew's House, Mission Services and Interval House. The CWL ladies from Hagersville donated 40 blankets to the Salvation Army and the Grade 6 students from St. Patrick Elementary School have knit and donated 19 blankets to the Good Shepherd Centre.

To date, a total of 13,500 blocks have been hand knitted. Caledonia and District Food Bank, Neighbour to Neighbour, the ice storm victims in southern Ontario and St. Vincent de Paul clients have been recipients of these warm and colourful blankets we call 'Joseph's coat of many

colours'.

The generous donations and on-going support from St. Patrick CWL and the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Caledonia is gratefully appreciated to help keep this program running.

A special thanks to our own Margaretha Groen, who has knitted and sewn together hundreds of blankets over the years. Thanks also goes out to all the knitters of Warm Up Canada from the organizations who are grateful for their labour of love.

Br. Richard MacPhee of the Good Shepherd Centre wrote, "Try to imagine what your blankets mean to people who are crying out for a tangible sign that someone out there cares about them. Try to imagine what your blankets mean to someone who has never possessed anything of value, to be able to cuddle up under a soft comforting rainbow of love and hope."

*If anyone is interested in finding out more about this program or making a donation contact me at 905-765-6619 or email: [Laurieken@sympatico.ca](mailto:Laurieken@sympatico.ca)*

**I am looking for anyone in the  
Port Colborne Welland area that is willing  
to volunteer by hand sewing together  
knitter squares into blankets,  
to be donated to Out-in-the-cold  
and those in need.**

**Wool will be supplied.**

**Please contact Mary Nan 905-834-9520**

**or email - [mary.nan@sympatico.ca](mailto:mary.nan@sympatico.ca)**



## **June Liturgical Calendar: Living with Christ**

**19<sup>th</sup>:** St. Romuald

**21<sup>st</sup>:** St. Aloysius Gonzaga

**22<sup>nd</sup>:** St. Paulinus of Nola / Sts. John Fisher and Thomas More

**24<sup>th</sup>:** **Nativity of Saint John the Baptist**

**27<sup>th</sup>:** St. Cyril of Alexandria

**28<sup>th</sup>:** St. Irenaeus

**29<sup>th</sup>:** **St. Peter and St. Paul**

**30<sup>th</sup>:** First Martyrs of the Holy Roman Church

### **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**

**CWL Executive: 2022-2024**

**President:** Lisa Fillingham

**Past President/Historian:** Frances Murdaca

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**Secretary:** Karen Hofstede

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**Communications Chair:** Theresa Murphy

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