



Catholic Women's League Diocese of St. Catharines



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

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MERRY CHRISTMAS



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President's Message



Sunday, December 21, 2025

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



And so, here we are, nearing the end of another year! On balance, how has 2025 been for you? My prayer is that it was fruitful and sprinkled with creativity, gratitude, hope, and worship.

The winter solstice is one of my favourite days of the year. The daylight starts to increase as we await the birth of true Son of God--who is our salvation from the darkness of the world. Imagine how bright that Bethlehem Star was during a time when there was no light pollution. Certainly, it was something to profoundly alert the shepherds and Wise Men. Let that Bethlehem Star shine as brightly in each of us.

Christmas will be upon us in a matter of days. You certainly still have time to breathe! Are your priorities in alignment with those of God's? Are you following His plan or your own? Are you making room for Baby Jesus in the manger of your own heart or are you preoccupied with the ways of the world? Perhaps reflect on these questions before the festivities start. I've learned in my many years, that if God is at the centre of your life, everything will fall into place as He intends. Trust God.

Happy New Year! Before we know it, we'll be ushering in 2026. A new start--perhaps a time to make new resolutions? Nothing earthshattering! Maybe start small--5 minutes of daily prayer. Saying the Rosary 2 times a week. Read one spiritual book before March (perhaps consider: Experts in Humanity--explained on the next page). Then build on those new practices--be gentle on yourself as God is gentle with us.



From the bottom of my heart, I pray that each of you has a beautiful and joyous Christmas and a Spirit-filled New Year!

Deedee Alexandre--905-732-4782 deedeecwl321@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—pre-natal 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 deedeecwl321@gmail.com

Take a few moments to explore these links--

you'll be happy you did!

- **The Vineyard**--take a look at the most recent copy of The Vineyard

<https://www.saintcd.com/diocesan-directory/the-vineyard>

- **Message from Betty Colaneri, CWL National President:**

https://www.cwl.ca/a-christmas-message-from-national-president-betty-colaneri/?fbclid=IwZXhobgNhZWOCMTAc3JoYwZhchBfaWQKNjYyODU2ODM3OQABHkUL7ajQmZnz5meEZY6OzSh3uMz9l3xo6RwvN525hgI5p9fVjJ1e65mHcC_-aem_dNODE_D2tgiPXdU9CYUvJg

- **New Year's Message from Sheila Walsh:**

--one of my favourite videos ever

--double click on the black area

--my sentiments exactly for each of you in
2026

**St. John of the Cross: Advent quotes
for the Christmas blues**



Josefa de Óbidos | Public Domain

[Tom Hoopes](#) - published on
12/14/20 - updated on 12/11/23

The great Spanish Carmelite has wisdom to help us through the tough parts of the season.

Depression at Christmastime is a real thing, whether it comes from financial stress, busyness, loneliness, grief, or estrangement.

The wisdom of the great Spanish Carmelite mystic St. John of the Cross, whose feast is celebrated December 14, can help you cope.

Praying in Darkness

“The endurance of darkness is the preparation for great light.”

This one is true of both the Advent darkness everyone feels, and the specific darkness you feel in your depression. Hold on. Christ is coming!

“It is best to learn to silence the faculties and to cause them to be still so that God may speak.”

A great reminder that, when you have nothing to say to God, he still wants to talk to you. In fact ...

“What we need most in order to make progress is to be silent before this great God with our appetite and with our tongue, for the language he best hears is silent love.”

... the deprivation of the senses you feel in depression can be offered to God, fruitfully.

“Contemplation is nothing else but a secret, peaceful, and loving infusion of God, which if admitted, will set the soul on fire with the Spirit of love.”

If you have trouble praying, don't worry. Just find a moment for God to offer him your silent love.

Waiting in Loneliness

“Take God for your spouse and friend and walk with him continually, and you will not sin and will learn to love, and the things you must do will work out prosperously for you.”

If you are single by choice or by circumstances and Christmas is hard, remember what St. John says here.

“If you purify your soul of attachment to and desire for things, you will understand them spiritually. If you deny your appetite for them, you will enjoy their truth, understanding what is certain in them.”

Living For Others

“Beloved, all that is harsh and difficult I want for myself, and all that is gentle and sweet for thee.”

Words for a Christmas mom to try out, if no one is helping like they should (but don't be afraid to let them know how they should help).

“It is great wisdom to know how to be silent and to look at neither the remarks, nor the deeds, nor the lives of others.”

A reminder to avoid gossip at the office Christmas party!

“In the dark night of the soul, bright flows the river of God.”

If you are depressed at Christmas, think of God as the Christmas star — or string of lights — whose light is out there whether you see it now or not.

“In the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone.”Christmas is a time to give — gifts, time, and love. And giving remains a great antidote to depression.



Sunday, December 14, 2025

There were three traditional Christmas Masses ...

The Catholic tradition of celebrating three distinct Masses on Christmas Day is an ancient and profound custom, rooted in the history of the Church in Rome and steeped in theological symbolism. While Catholics are only required to attend one Mass to fulfill the holy day obligation, the three Masses beautifully symbolize the threefold birth of Christ: His eternal birth from the Father, His temporal birth from the Virgin Mary, and His spiritual birth in our hearts.

1. The Mass During the Night (The Angels' Mass)

Time: Midnight (or late Christmas Eve).

Symbolism: This Mass focuses on Christ's Eternal Birth from the Father, a hidden, mysterious, and miraculous event. Celebrated in the darkness of night, it mirrors the spiritual darkness of the world before Christ's coming. It emphasizes the immediate, hidden moment of the Nativity.

Key Scripture Theme: The Nativity Narrative itself, featuring the Gospel of Luke where the angels announce the birth to the shepherds.

2. The Mass at Dawn (The Shepherds' Mass)

Time: Daybreak.

Symbolism: As the natural light begins to return, this Mass focuses on Christ's Spiritual Birth in the hearts of the faithful. Christ is celebrated as the "Sun of Justice" bringing illumination to the world. The shift from the deep night to the first light of day symbolizes the dawning of grace in humanity. The Shepherds, the first to adore Christ, represent the simple faithful who are drawn to Him.

Key Scripture Theme: The Adoration of the Shepherds (Luke), focusing on the shepherds hastening to the crib and proclaiming the Good News.

3. The Mass During the Day (The King's Mass)

Time: Morning/Daytime.

Symbolism: Celebrated in the fullness of day, this Mass focuses on Christ's Temporal/Historical Birth and the full revelation of His Divinity and Incarnation to the whole world. It proclaims Christ as the Eternal Word made flesh and the undisputed King of Kings.

Key Scripture Theme: The Prologue of St. John's Gospel ("In the beginning was the Word..."), which provides the most theological reflection on the Incarnation: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." All of this comes from the Church's ancient historical practice, the texts of the Roman Missal, and authoritative theological teaching.

How to call on Mary: Vatican Note clarifies titles



Nicole Piegras | Shutterstock

[Kathleen N. Hattrup](#) - published on 11/04/25--*Aleteia*

The document "responds to numerous requests and proposals that have reached the Holy See in recent decades," it says. It rejects the term "co-redemptrix."

The Vatican released this November 4 a document on the titles that are used for Mary, Mother of Jesus. It is titled: The Mother of the Faithful People of God.

The document "responds to numerous requests and proposals that have reached the Holy See in recent decades," it says.

It explains:

The main problem in interpreting those titles as applied to the Virgin Mary is how one should understand her association with Christ's work of Redemption — that is, "what is the meaning of Mary's unique cooperation in the plan of salvation?"

The present document, without intending to be comprehensive or exhaustive, seeks to maintain the necessary balance that must be established within the Christian mysteries between Christ's sole mediation and Mary's cooperation in the work of salvation, and it seeks to show how this is expressed in various Marian titles.

The document goes on to explain how the title "co-redemptrix" is problematic. And it warns against a false understanding of the term "mediatrix of all graces."

The document is divided into 80 brief, accessible sections and can be read in full [here](#).

It was signed by the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, and the Secretary for the Dicastery's Doctrinal Section, Monsignor Armando Matteo. The Note was approved by Pope Leo XIV on October 7, feast of the Holy Rosary.

Article is updated below:

The Note draws heavily from the Church Fathers, various saints, and recent popes, and especially Scripture.

No to "Co-Redemptrix"

Calling on teaching especially of Joseph Ratzinger (the future Benedict XVI), the Note concludes:

Given the necessity of explaining Mary's subordinate role to Christ in the work of Redemption, *it would not be appropriate* to use the title "Co-redemptrix" to define Mary's cooperation. This title risks obscuring Christ's unique salvific mediation and can therefore create confusion and an imbalance in the harmony of the truths of the Christian faith

"Mediatrix" with prudence

The Note insists that titles for Mary cannot cause confusion with regard to Christ's unique role. Scripture is very clear that "the Incarnate Word's role is exclusive and unique."

Thus the Vatican says:

"Given this clarity in the revealed Word of God, special prudence is required when applying the term "Mediatrix" to Mary. In response to a tendency to broaden the scope of Mary's cooperation through this title, it is helpful to specify the range of its value as well as its limits.

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

