



CWL

St. Catharines Diocese

Thursday, January 5, 2023



CWL Catholic Connections

National CWL: cwl.ca

ON Provincial CWL: cwl.on.ca

St. Catharines CWL: stcatharinescwl.ca

**CWL
President's Message**

Dear Members of the CWL,

One of the biggest challenges our society deals with is mental health. This does not change with every New Year; what does change with every year is the growing acceptance and more people willing to admit they have this issue. To start our New Year please pray for those to find the strength to deal with this illness and the strength to live with it.

A Prayer for the Mentally Ill

The righteous cry out, the Lord hears
and he rescues them from all their afflictions.

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted,
saves those whose spirit is crushed.

PSALM 34:18-20

LOVING GOD, YOU ARE ALWAYS NEAR TO US, ESPECIALLY
WHEN WE ARE WEAK, SUFFERING AND VULNERABLE.

Reach out to those who experience mental illness. Lift their burdens,
calm their anxiety, and quiet their fears. Surround them with your
healing presence that they may know that they are not alone. We
ask this through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes and in the
name of your Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

AMEN.

Lisa Fillingham

Messages From Deedee Alexandre:

Quote for the Month:

Christ looks for nothing else from you, in fact, except loving him
with all your heart and carrying out his commands.

--St. John Chrysostom

Dear Ladies,

Happy New Year! Have a blessed 2024 and stay warm!

Of particular note for January is for you to read over the **2024**
AMM material that is attached to the Catholic Connections. If you
have any questions--please contact: Lisa Fillingham, Dina
Marchionda, or me. We are ready and willing to help.

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
St. Catharines Diocesan Council**

**66th Annual Diocesan
Annual Meeting of Members
(Convention)**



**Holiday Inn and Suites Parkway
Conference Centre
327 Ontario Street, St. Catharines, Ontario**

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

Guest Speaker	CWL ON-President	CWL National President	Banquet Keynote Speaker
Adelaine Nohara	Linda Squarzollo	Shari Guinta	Josephine Lombardi



AMM Registration: 7:45 a.m.-8:45 a.m. Tuesday, April 23, 2024

\$40.00: registration +

- lunch and day meeting = \$85.00
- banquet only = \$110.00
- full day--including banquet = \$150.00

**TO REGISTER,
PLEASE CONTACT
your
Parish Council
President!**

Please note: Vendors will be at the AMM Convention. The only **beverages** provided pre-AMM, at breaks, and at lunch are water, coffee, and tea; **no** juices, etc.

Registration Deadline: Thursday, March 21, 2024

Holy Rosary Parish

We held a Christmas Social and Dinner at Club Belvedere on December 12.

Below, is a picture of our accompanist Ireyna (a Ukrainian Refugee) and our Faith Chair, Barbara, leading us in Christmas carols.

Thank you.

Kim Kuchar, President



St. George Parish

St. George's CWL had a lovely CATERED Dinner at one of our Member's homes in early December. While the atmosphere was definitely Winter & Christmas-inspired, we had a focus on Advent (an often forgotten Season) by distributing small reflective booklets & a nicely presented "how to" on making the preparation for Christmas meaningfully spiritual. We also helped begin the new Church Year by giving out a personal Scripture Verse to each attendee...a keepsake for 2024! With a few basket raffles and a 50/50, we are able to give a gift to a needy charity as well! All to honor the Lord while having a fun evening together! ***Catholic and Living It!***

Marjorie Eagan--contact person



Socktober – Out of the Cold Donation

By Connie Tracey
President
Star of the Sea CWL
St. Catharines, ON
Dec, 2023

Our wonderfully charitable parishioners donated more than 600 pairs of socks, as well as hand knitted hats and scarves and knitted blankets.

Here is a photo of Susan Venditti from Out of the Cold, when she happily received the goods. As you can see, her trunk was jampacked! Our Star of the Sea family is so giving!!!!

Susan also was absolutely overwhelmed by our parish CWL's generous cash donation of \$1000 for groceries for the Out of the Cold dinners provided by the Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria. Thank you all!!!!



Susan Venditti – Chair of the St. Catharines
Out of the Cold Interchurch Committee



Susan Venditti with Connie Tracey

Chez Marie Refugee Centre and Outreach Projects

By Linda Dirks, Spiritual Chair, Star of the Sea CWL, St. Catharines, ON
December, 2023

Since 2019, our CWL has partnered with Chez Marie on Pelham Road to bring Christmas cheer to the families and individuals who live there. There are 8 rooms at the shelter that are open to welcome and house families until their paperwork is completed. After that, an apartment is found for them in the region. Our "warm hands warm heart" project is a legacy activity done in memory of Joanne Schenck-Campbell who chaired the parish Refugee Ministry. This project is part of Linda Dirks & Marie Talsworth's "Warm Hands Warm Heart" project. Each year, we provide 260 individuals with warm gloves/mitts plus a \$5 Tim's card as a welcome to Canada gift.



Each year a large Christmas party is held at the shelter for all the year's newcomers. On December 20th guests received the knitted hats and scarves, warm socks and Christmas crackers filled with Lindor Chocolates. Each cracker was hand-crafted, assembled, stuffed and tied up with a bow by a special angel on our CWL.

Twelve Refugee Families had a brighter Christmas thanks to our parish.

A local business took on the sponsorship of the families/individuals that were at Chez Marie over Christmas this past year. Maria Londono, Shelter Co-ordinator and Outreach Worker, asked the CWL to adopt 8 refugee families that have recently moved out of the hotels in Niagara Falls. The ladies quickly selected their families and their needs were requested and then met. It was a team effort with knitted goods, hygiene products, and gifts for the family members neatly wrapped and delivered to Maria on Saturday, December 16. Families from Peru, El Salvador, Mexico and Columbia had a bright Christmas because we shared the light of Christ with them.



The first family is from Venezuela. They are staying at Oaks Hotel and asked Karen Shakespeare-Ekstein for help. Karen started collecting items, Father made a donation, Tracey Findlay of the Ice Dogs involved and, like twelve drummers drumming, people answered the call.

It is a corporal work of mercy to welcome the stranger and since welcoming the Kadmous family in 2016, our church has made this our mission.

St. Joseph Parish, Grimsby

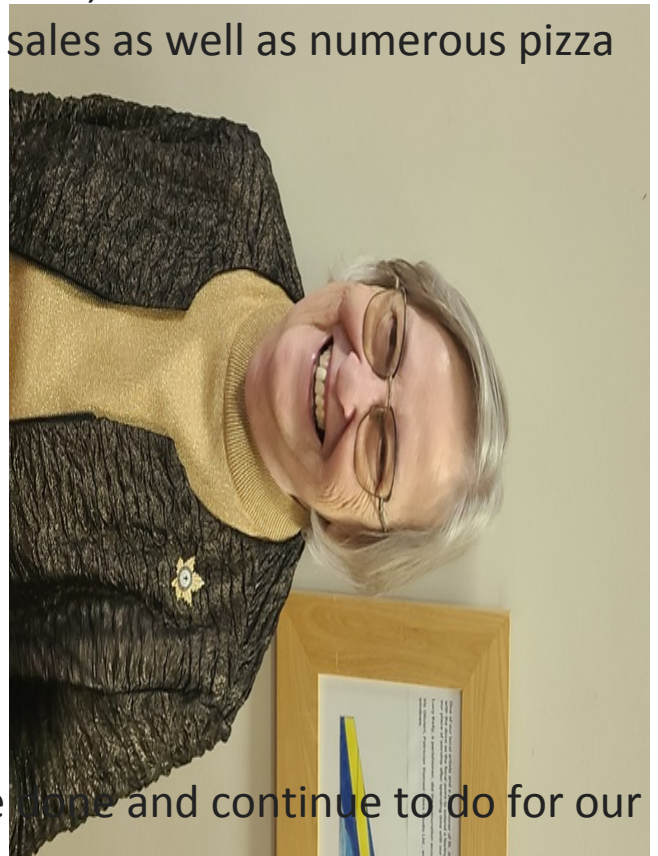
Mary Hendriks is the backbone of our CWL. She was our first President when our charter was reinstated in 2015. She held that position for 2 years then continued her duties as Past President for the following 2 years.

She has chaired the Funeral and Fundraising Committees since that time to the present. She has, for a number of years, taken on all of the organization for funeral receptions, plant sales as well as numerous pizza fundraisers.

Mary is an extremely strong example of our core values of Faith, Service and Social Justice. She is our “go to” person who is more than willing to share her knowledge and expertise with all of us.

At our Christmas dinner we honoured Mary with the Maple Leaf Service pin for her outstanding contributions. May God bless you, Mary, for all that you have done and continue to do for our St. Joseph CWL.

Congratulations!



Joanne Vander Laan, President

God wants you to waste your time

Our worth doesn't depend on our productivity.

RELIGION

ALICE CAMILLE

Published 5 hours ago January 4, 2024



What are you looking for? Jesus asks this question of his disciples, those who propose to fall in line behind him. It's a question we might ask more than we do. New Year's resolutions are a way to enter this question through the backdoor: Do we hope to be stronger, healthier, or just thinner? Do we want to pursue a virtuous life or just get our exterior act together?

For some of us, time may be running out to make the necessary changes. I became eligible for Medicare last year: More decades are behind me than ahead of me. So what am I looking for from my time in this world, and what's the best way to pursue it?

Discernment, the name of this soul-searching decision-making process, isn't merely a New Year's activity. The church has long recommended a nightly examination of conscience to stay in touch with who we are becoming at the deepest level of our being. Contemplative prayer is another way to sit and listen as "heart speaks to heart": as your heart rests against the heart of God and seeks to imitate the divine rhythm. Some of us may have the means to go on an annual retreat for a weekend, a week, or longer. You may attend occasional days of recollection offered at spiritual centers. Or you may prefer to go camping

and make it into a kind of pilgrimage into the presence of God in creation.

Depending on the stage of life where you happen to be perched, some discernment methods will be more accessible or attractive. When I started my career in church work, I had neither the time nor the money for retreats. But I could take long solitary walks through the city, and I did, gradually shrugging off all the busyness in my head until the “small, still voice” that saints and prophets hear could finally make itself understood.

Please don’t imagine I rank up there with saints and prophets. I didn’t always empty my brain or attain inner stillness even after hours and miles of walking. What Buddhist teachers call “monkey mind” is my natural state: thoughts swinging from vine to vine through a jungle of trivia both practical and pointless. I’m a planner and a worrier. I go from making a mental note to buy a new toothbrush to wondering if this ache in my jaw is something serious to deciding I should see a bone specialist—and to update my will, just in case.

These days, I have more time—or perhaps choose to make more time—to sit still and “waste time with God,” as an old spiritual director used to recommend in my more frantic periods. Back then, wasting time sounded to me like sloth, one of the seven deadly sins. I couldn’t imagine doing that or that God would actually waste time with me, though God has all of eternity to dispose of. Surely God has more vital things to do in the universe than hang out with me while my monkey mind leaps from tree to tree thinking about family and work and what’s for supper tonight.

Family, work, and supper remain concerning. But in the Medicare years, I've finally accepted that I'm not as essential to the machinery of the cosmos as I once believed. As a writer, I would get anxious when a moment of genius visited me in the supermarket and I had no means with which to record the insight before it was lost forever. An older and wiser writer assured me that visitations of genius have very little to do with writing, and no phrase is so perfect that losing it will do the universe any harm.

So I've managed to make friends with stillness and no longer confuse doing nothing with laziness. "Wasting time with God" is a down payment on eternity after all, a temporal trust walk that suggests we believe God will supply all the time we need to get all that's needed done.

Hoarding our mortal time as so precious that we can't waste it on God in stillness is an indication that we don't really believe all the stuff we pretend to profess. Which is why, on those many occasions in which I find myself standing in the middle of a room, torn between separately screaming tasks and unsure which direction to move, I sometimes hear an inner voice shout: "Sit down!" And I do. The busier you are, the more nothing you need to be doing. This is the only wisdom I have to impart on the subject of discernment: Do more nothing.

We're so persuaded that being productive is the justification of our existence. No surprise there: From the beginning, everything in our experience tells us this is so. Parents demand that we do our chores or clean up our rooms. In our formative years, teachers and tests and mounds of homework stare us in the face. Years of education are followed by decades in the workforce. Now parents ourselves, we raise

children while struggling to keep up with housework, errands, meal preparation. Getting stuff done is why we are here— isn't it?

Then comes the question: But what if we're getting the wrong stuff done? What if the most important stuff languishes while we do another load of laundry and boil another pot of rice? This is the moment when that question of Jesus to would-be disciples might invade our thoughts: What are you looking for? It's the discernment question, the one that tells us where to aim this journey of ours and to course correct if need be. To course correct as needed, more likely. Because it seems we're always drifting off into some random territory while fixated on doing the laundry or making the rice.

Monks learn that it's possible to chop wood and carry water and do so prayerfully. They don't have to stop and say formal prayers—though in fact they choose to pause for prayer at many hours of the day and do it with full presence and mindfulness, as if it were a new encounter each time. Which it is. Some of us like to say our work is our prayer, and that's not entirely wrong—so long as we don't substitute wood-chopping and water-carrying for the real thing.

Our work can become prayer only after the spirit of prayer invades our bones and takes over the jungle of our thoughts. It's only after sitting in stillness, leaning into the holy presence as the beloved disciple leans into Jesus at the Last Supper, with mortal heart beating against divine heart, learning the divine rhythm in our whole being, that we can dare to make the claim that what we do the rest of our time is an incarnation of prayer.

What are you and I looking for? What are our lives about? It's certainly good to have clean clothes and regular meals, to make a living and pay bills. For believers, life includes saying prayers and going to church, sharing our resources with others in need. But that's just the tiniest bit of what it means to follow Jesus. Discipleship fundamentally involves being a healing presence for the sick, lonely, and sorrowful. Being summoned to show compassion, to forgive offenses, to insist on justice.

We're here to love, bring peace, inspire hope, share joy, and make captives free. If that doesn't sound like what we're doing, now's a good time to sit awhile and discern the path we're on.



Passed Away:

a) Irene Iannuzzeli--August 19, 2023; St. Thomas More--
4 years of service

b) Sarah Baldo--October 9, 2023; St. Thomas More--13 years of service

c) Mary Corsaro--November 20, 2023; St. Thomas More--**62 years of service!!!**

Upcoming CWL Events!!!

2024 Lenten Retreats!

Dear Ladies,

I have not had time to create the poster for the Lenten Retreats. Here are the **major details**:

- **\$50.00 / person / lunch included at Mount Carmel**
- **2 dates available: Sat., Feb. 17 or Wed., Feb. 21**
- **Father Michael Basque will be the guest speaker**
- **Pre-registration due to Dina Marchionda**
8739 Milomir Street
Niagara Falls, ON L2H
0A7
by: Friday, February 9th

Any questions? Please contact Deedee at 905-732-4782

or deedealexandre321@gmail.com

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

Treasurer: Dina Marchionda

Secretary:

President-Elect: Deedee Alexandre

Spiritual Development Chair: Deedee Alexandre

Service Chair: Diane Szydowski

Social Justice Chair: Sue Pellerin

Communications Chair: Theresa Murphy

Spiritual Director: Father Richard Kowalchuk