



**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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CWL Diocesan Executive: 2024-2026

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President's Message



Dear Bishop Bergie, Father Richard Kowalchuk, Clergy, and Sisters in the League!
--Feb. 14, 2026



Before I launch into this edition of Catholic Connections, I would like you to take a moment to say the Hail Mary--for the casualties of Tumbler Ridge, BC shooting. Our collective hearts go to the victims, families, and community.

I hope that everyone is enjoying the "warmer" weather! Does anyone else feel the excitement in the air? Ash Wednesday begins on **Feb. 18**--right around the corner! Every day is an opportunity to show our love for God, but Lent certainly has its own gravitas; please be sure to read the article about St. Basil and fasting.

There is also excitement because of up-coming CWL events! The two Lenten Retreats at Mount Carmel will be on **Feb. 21 and Feb. 25**. Father Patrick Gilmurray will be the presenter who will do a deep and reflective dive into Lent. **Saturday, March 28** (note new date) will be the League Development Day--topic: The Joy of Leadership--in your life. That will be at St. Alexander from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Make sure you register with your Parish Council President.

We are also in the final stretch of my term as CWL Diocesan President--the AMM is **Tuesday, April 21**. This year we will have an exciting AMM--we have amendments to vote on as well as two resolutions! In addition, there will also be the installation of the new Diocesan Executive! And, we will have an evening banquet!

Betty Colaneri, from St. Thomas More, Niagara Falls, is our CWL National President. In keeping with her focus: "Blessed are the

poor”, the AMM planning committee is suggesting that new and/or gently used blankets be collected and distributed before **April 21**. Each parish council can collect these blankets and donate them to a social service. The size of the blanket is suggested to be at least a twin. It is further suggested that the parish council contact the



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social service to ask if blankets would be welcomed. More than one parish, of course, can contribute to the same social service. Please take a photo of the collected blankets before you deliver them and send the pic to Deedee. Thank you so much for your generosity. Please do this before the AMM.

This year’s Provincial AMM will take place **July 5-8** in Thunder Bay. This year’s National AMM will take place **August 9-12** in Halifax.

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"Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us."

(1 John 4:11-12)

*Happy Feast Day of
Saint Valentine!*

BOYLAN
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

St. Basil's remedy to destroy sin in your life



James Tissot | Public Domain

[Philip Kosloski](#) - published on 02/24/19 - updated on 02/11/26

The medicine may be hard to swallow, but its effectiveness is surprising.

Living in a fallen world, we all experience the effects of sin. Many of us are continually bound in a slavery to sin that's difficult to escape.

Whatever the sin may be, St. Basil has a remedy that he believes will free you from any attachment to sin in your life.

Fasting

He writes in a homily, "Be of good cheer, for the physician has given you a medicine that destroys sin ... **fasting — a remedy truly worthy of its appellation** — when introduced into the soul, kills off the sin that lurks deep within it."

Basil firmly believed that **fasting gives strength to the sinner**, giving us the ability to resist our sinful impulses. He holds up fasting as the secret remedy for our attachments and a sure way to holiness.

Fasting gives birth to prophets and strengthens the powerful; fasting makes lawgivers wise. Fasting is a good safeguard for the soul, a steadfast companion for the body, a weapon for the valiant, and a gymnasium for athletes. Fasting repels temptations, anoints unto piety; it is the comrade of watchfulness and the artificer of chastity. In war it fights bravely, in peace it teaches stillness.

In his homily Basil explains how fasting was an essential part of the lives of biblical characters such as Moses and Daniel and even Jesus himself. If fasting was so important for them, should we not adopt it into our lives?

At the same time, Basil admits that fasting from food should be further reinforced by an exercise of charity. He warns, "You do not eat meat, but you devour your brother. You abstain from wine, but do not restrain yourself from insulting others. You wait until evening to eat, but waste your day in law courts."

Fasting must be accompanied by a positive practice of virtue, replacing what you gave up with something good.

So if you want to conquer sin in your life, try some type of fasting. Especially during Lent, this can transform our hearts and detach it from any sinful habits that remain in our soul.

5 Bible quotes showing the true power of love



Masson | Shutterstock

[Cerith Gardiner](#) - published on 02/13/26

As couples around the world celebrate their love, here's a little reminder of its true power for everyone.

So it's Valentine's Day and love is front and center. Yet, what if you don't really feel the love right now? What if you're actually feeling despair, anger, or even hatred, towards certain people, society, or institutions?

Well, this is the moment to turn to the Bible. You'll see again and again that Scripture insists that love — not outrage, not fear, not even righteous anger — is what ultimately endures and transforms. Here are five passages that help re-center that truth, especially when emotions are running high.

1 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4–7

“Love is patient, love is kind. Love is not jealous; love is not pompous...”

This foundational passage in Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians describes love not as an emotion but as a pattern of actions and dispositions. Patience and kindness are countercultural in times of outrage. Instead of reacting with irritation or anger, this passage invites a generosity of spirit that seeks to understand before condemning.

In a moment when many are quick to judge, Paul’s definition recalibrates our understanding of love as a series of deliberate choices — to be patient, to be kind, and to *bear all things* rather than wedge deeper divisions.

2 JOHN 15:13

“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

Here, Jesus defines love in terms of self-sacrifice. It’s not sentimental; it’s demanding. This “greater love” lays down comfort, convenience, and even safety for the sake of others

When conversations around culture and public expression grow heated, this verse reminds us that the most powerful love often *costs something*. Love that endures — love that heals — is willing to step into the messy and the uncomfortable for another’s good.

3 ROMANS 12:21

“Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good.”

Paul doesn't deny the reality of wrongdoing or offense. Instead, he insists that responding in kind only amplifies division. The path to real transformation is through *goodness* that refuses to retaliate.

In cultural controversies, it can be tempting to answer frustration with sharper rhetoric. This verse points elsewhere: toward love as the means by which *evil is overcome* — not by force, but by goodness.

41 JOHN 4:18

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear...”

John's letter links love and freedom from fear. Fear can harden hearts and polarize conversations. Love, rooted in trust, softens them.

When disagreements make us anxious or defensive, this reminder invites us to reframe our response. Love frees us from fear of difference, enabling courageous engagement with others rather than retreating into identity alone.

5 JOHN 13:34

“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you...”

Jesus' teaching here is not descriptive but prescriptive. It doesn't say “If you feel like it...” It commands love modeled on Christ's own self-giving.

At the heart of Christian discipleship is this imperative: to love others not as we choose, but as Christ models. When we choose love — even toward those we disagree with — we reflect a deeper allegiance to God's way of life.



James Van Der Beek and trusting in God's plan



Robyn Beck / AFP

L'acteur américain James Van Der Beek, héros de la série phare de la fin des années 1990 et du début des années 2000 Dawson, est décédé ce mercredi 11 février 2026.

[Cerith Gardiner](#) - published on 02/12/26--Aleteia

The much-loved actor passed away leaving behind a reminder for us all to trust in God's plan.

When news broke that James Van Der Beek had died at just 48 after his battle with stage three colorectal cancer, the loss felt particularly heavy. For many, he would always remain the quick-witted Dawson Leery of *Dawson's Creek*, a familiar face woven into youth and memory.

But in the hours following his passing, it was not his career that drew the eye. It was the images and words from those who had sat beside him near the end.

One photograph, shared by his friend Stacy Keibler, captured a moment both simple and piercing: the actor seated in a wheelchair, watching a sunset. The scene could have been anyone's backyard, anyone's evening — which perhaps explains why it resonated so deeply. Keibler's accompanying words were even more arresting.

Keibler shared: "Spending these final days with you has been a true gift from God," describing a time marked not by spectacle but by stillness. "When you know time is sacred, you don't waste a single breath. You don't rush. You don't scroll. You don't worry about tomorrow."

There is something profoundly Christian in that observation. Illness, particularly one that carries the shadow of mortality, has a way of stripping life down to its essentials. What remains is not achievement but presence — the radical, sometimes difficult act of simply being where one is.

Keibler's tribute goes further still, hinting at the spiritual posture Van Der Beek himself seemed to embody. "You showed me what it looks like to trust God's plan, even when it breaks your heart. Especially when it breaks your heart."

"I am worthy of God's love simply because I exist."

As [shared by People](#), the father of six spoke candidly about how his illness reshaped his inner life and his relationship with God. Reflecting on his journey, he shared a striking shift in perspective:

"Before cancer, God was something I tried to fit into my life ... after cancer, I feel like a connection to God, whatever that is, is kind of the whole point of this exercise on this planet."

His reflections often revealed a faith marked less by easy certainty and more by surrender. In another deeply personal admission, he said: "I am worthy of God's love simply because I exist." It is a statement that speaks to a rediscovered sense of dignity — one not rooted in productivity, success, or even health, but in something far more fundamental.

Perhaps most striking was his ability to perceive meaning even within suffering. "As soon as I heard the news, I thought, "This is going to be the best thing that ever happened to me,"" he recalled. Such words are not naïve optimism but suggest a man wrestling honestly with hardship, searching for grace rather than despair.

That interior transformation also altered how he experienced daily life:

"I think before cancer, I took all these little, beautiful moments as part of a collective ... now I'm able much more to just settle into that exact moment."

Words demonstrating how gratitude, presence, and attentiveness became not abstract virtues but lived realities for the late actor.

The imagery Keibler recalls — sunsets, a shooting star streaking across the sky — feels especially poignant in that light. "As if to remind us that none of this is random," she wrote. Beneath the poetry lies a deeply biblical intuition: that even amid loss, life is not governed by chaos.

Van Der Beek's own words about fatherhood echo this same orientation. Despite a successful career, he spoke of being a parent as the experience that changed everything, describing the simple, aching desire to take care of his children, to make them feel safe, and to share in their joy.

In the end, it is this image that lingers: not the actor under studio lights, but the man seated at sunset, a husband, a father, a believer learning — as so many do — that trust in God is rarely about understanding, and almost always about surrender.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

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**



