



February 2023

Transitional Executive

President: Maryse Ristuccia
Secretary: Celestine Hall
Treasurer: Joan Beal
Spiritual Development: Karen Eckert
Community/Family Life: Jenni Commanda
Dorothy Currie
Education: Corinne Santianni
Health: Krysia Theriault
Geri Crisci
Communications: Carmen Vanderreest

Contact information for the executives can be found at the end of this newsletter.

CWL Websites

National: www.cwl.ca
2023 theme: *Catholic and Living It!*
Provincial: www.cwl.on.ca
2023 theme: *Go Make a Difference*
Diocesan: www.cwltoronto.ca
2023 theme: *Called to Serve*

The Catholic Women's League of Canada (CWL) is a sisterhood, rooted in Gospel values that, "Calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service". The CWL is guided by its motto "For God and Canada".

Patroness of the CWL is Our Lady of Good Counsel whose feast day is April 26th.

Parish Website

<https://stjohnsto.archtoronto.org>
This is the website for all matters relating to our church. Use it for all contact information and its many links to items such as the weekly Bulletin and other great resources for our parish and for the Archdiocese.

Parish YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8pLWrdARlezRMzjHZJv9aQ>
Use this link to view all videos posted by our church including Sunday Masses. Be sure to "like" the channel.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on **Sunday, March 5th** in the church Hall at 12 noon – right after the 11:00 Mass. A light lunch will be served and all are welcome to bring a friend or partner. Our scheduled speaker is local historian Gene Domagala. He will speak on Places of Worship in the Beaches area.

If you are able, please bring a donation for our local food bank – they are in need of canned vegetables & fruit, canned fish, meat & beans, cereals, pasta sauces, any nut butters and baby diapers sized 1 to 5.

Come Pray the Rosary

We pray the Rosary every Friday night at 8:00 p.m. online via Zoom. Prayers matter, prayers support and uplift. If you have a special prayer request for our Rosary night please let Maryse or Carmen know. Cameras do not have to be on and everyone will be asked to mute their microphones at the beginning of prayers. Only those leading the prayers will be heard. Everyone is welcome to follow along. The link below is the same link used every Friday:
<https://zoom.us/j/94327881622?pwd=UWpCTJR4cjFldGc5Yjk4bE5nbEg0dz09>

If needed: Meeting ID: 943 2788 1622
Pass code: 263230
Dial up: +1 647 374 4685 Canada
+1 647 558 0588 Canada

Prayers

Let us remember these fellow sisters in our prayers:
Elizabeth Barrett Marlene Libbus Carmel Richard

Help is Here

We have members who are happy to help anyone needing assistance with grocery shopping, errands or appointments. Please contact Maryse at:
maryse.ristuccia@gmail.com

Türkiye – Syria Earthquakes



On February 6th a powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake and a series of strong tremors and aftershocks devastated the southeast of Türkiye (formerly Turkey) and northwest Syria. Two weeks later on February 20th

an additional 6.3 magnitude earthquake hit southern Türkiye, causing additional deaths and injuries. More than 87,000 are injured and hundreds of thousands displaced across a region already in turmoil from the nearly 12-year conflict in Syria and the ongoing refugee crisis.

The death toll has passed 50,000 and continues to rise. The World Health Organization reports that 26 million people need assistance across both countries. Financial donations to help in this crisis can be sent through these secure online sites:

The Archdiocese of Toronto:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/en/contact-us/donations/donate-pages/donate-to-turkiye-and-syria-relief/>

Red Cross of Canada:

<https://www.redcross.ca/donate/appeal/earthquake-in-turkiye-and-syria-appeal#14bf71f5-0d57-497d-acd2-9b372e8a543a>

Valentine Cards

We are so happy to report that, in total, 149 Valentine cards were made and then delivered to senior residents at Presentation Manor and Main Street Terrace. Most of these cards had been made by members at home while some were written out as an activity at our January meeting. Also made at home by member Maria Wong were these lovely multi-coloured crocheted hearts – thanks Maria!

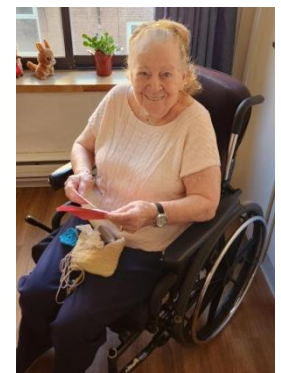


Below is one of the many cards made and sent.



Taneka Dennis, recreation manager at Main Street Terrace sent this short thank you message and these photos of residents receiving our cards:

“Every day should be Valentine’s Day. Main Street Terrace would like to show our appreciation to St John Parish Women’s League. Thank you!”



Message from Maryse

February has been a short but jam-packed month it seems for all of us. This is a good thing, we needed to keep busy to ward off all those grey days. Our February meeting had us writing Valentine cards for seniors and sandwich making for those in need. We worked together, and laughed as our production line made lots of nourishing sandwiches. Kudos to Richard Ainey, husband of member Kay Ainey, who came to join us for lunch and the activities. It is good to have family members come and join in and see what we are all about. If you are interested please do come and join us for a meeting, no strings attached.

Those Valentine cards were delivered to two different nursing homes and it was my pleasure to see the happiness it elicited from the staff as they were dropped off. Some seniors have very little interaction with their families and some don't get any visitors at all. Those little cards, made by our members, brought sunshine to their day. Perhaps during Lent, each of us can reach out to someone living alone, or at a nursing

home. A phone call or dropping by for a short visit can make a world of difference. Lent isn't just about giving up sweets but putting in place actions that make us more like Jesus wants us to be. You can read more about our Valentines and our sandwich making in this newsletter. I just wanted to note, from my perspective I was touched by the effect our little projects created. As we journey through Lent, we have a couple of projects in the works to bring our members and parish together in a meaningful way. As in past years we have organized a Healing Mass for all, which is a moving and emotional evening. In conjunction with the choir, the CWL invites all to come and experience this uplifting celebration of the Eucharist which will bring us closer to Jesus and more prepared to share in the Easter Triduum. Another opportunity will be Mary's Way of the Cross, a beautiful walk through the Stations of The Cross from the perspective of Mary, Jesus' mother. Just as in all our events, thought and preparation has gone into these two evenings and your attendance is needed to make them truly rewarding. Watch for details and then come out and bring your family and friends. Our March meeting is just days away and we have organized an interesting speaker for all to enjoy. Local historian, Gene Domagala, will share his knowledge on the places of worship in our Beaches community. I am looking forward to hearing some interesting historical information about the places I walk and drive by all the time. March will also bring back another fun bake sale for all to enjoy. Many would often rush to pick up an Irish Soda Bread loaf at our past bake sales, well you will have a chance to enjoy a loaf very soon!

March winds can be harsh and the days still grey, although, more hours of daylight make it much easier to feel energetic. Let us not count the days but make our days count: get involved, share your gifts and reach out to others. Lent is a time to see what and how we can GO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Our membership numbers are slowly increasing and we now stand at 47 members! It's not too late to join. Your membership is important to us. Prior to the pandemic, there were 68 members. Please consider joining the League, a way to make your voice heard and enhance the role of women in the church.

Cupcake Fundraiser

We were pleasantly surprised at the success of our cupcake fundraiser! There was never doubt that it would do well, we were simply unsure as to how many people would stop to "shop" while the covid and flu viruses continue to be present. And, shop they did – buying up all 200 cupcakes! A huge thanks to our decorators: Monique, Karen, Christine & Maryse and to

those who helped sell: Celeste, Joann, Carmen, Karen, Monique & Anne. Many thanks to everyone who bought – we'll definitely have more next time!



3 of our decorators – Monique, Karen & Christine

Spiritual Development

By Karen Eckert

On Aging Without Bitterness

Although I am only in my sixties, I have been thinking a lot about the challenges of aging. My parents lived into their mid nineties and died not so long ago. Plus, I have a very good friend who is 92 who lives on a memory-challenged floor of a private nursing home. Some people age cheerfully and some bitterly.

Of course, there are some conditions of aging over which we have no control. Why people must suffer through torment and seem to lose themselves is a mystery which I will address perhaps at a later time. Now more than ever....

It seems to me very prudent to prepare for old age by developing a strong spiritual life and the winter of our lives is very favorable to such a journey. In the natural world, though under the guise of dormancy and death,

life is preparing itself to renew again, so too are we encouraged to prepare ourselves inwardly for a new birth. And remember, there is beauty in winter – consider the pure magic of a new snowfall – so too does snow fall in pale beauty on our faces to paraphrase Wilfred Owen in `Winter Song`.

As our physical strength declines and we can DO less and less, we can still pray. In fact, sometimes that is all we can do. And if dementia strips us of our ability to pray, then we can know that the Holy Spirit will pray for us. I remember attending a retreat given by Father Ron Rolheiser. He made the analogy of waking up frequently at night to living the life of a monk that gets up to pray at all hours. Our third time going to the bathroom? Make it our third time saying a prayer... When Christ departs for heaven, he tells Peter that now he can go where he wants, but there will come a time when he will be forced to go where he does not want to go and where he will not be able to dress himself. Many people think this passage refers to Peter's eventual martyrdom, but I have always thought of it as a warning to all of us of what is to come in old age. Often the elderly lose their independence and must live in nursing homes, or assisted living centers, or wherever their strong-willed children decide is best for them. It is the rare and wise elder who can accept their loss of freedom and independence and joyfully offer them up to God.

The Toronto Diocesan Council (TDC) held its annual Development Day online for all members on Saturday, February 11th. Four of our members attended the session together from Maryse's house - thanks Maryse! The theme was *Go Make a Difference* and had Honourary Life Member Barbara Dowding as keynote speaker in the morning session. Barbara spoke on *The Art of Accompaniment*, asking who had accompanied, or mentored, each of us in our CWL journey. The afternoon session was led by the TDC standing committee chairs who spoke on *Putting the Beatitudes into Action to Go Make a Difference*.

The slide presentation will be sent out soon so all members can view the Beatitudes presentation.

The Manresa Jesuit Spiritual Renewal Centre in Pickering offers many spiritual retreats throughout each year. On Monday, March 27th they are offering *Mass Alive, Yes, Really Alive!* which will be facilitated by Fr. Robert Foliot, SJ.

“When we Catholics want to pray together, we go to Mass. But the Mass can become so routine, it can become boring. What happens at Mass that could make us choose to want to go again and again? Come

and reflect on how the Mass could stay fresh, relevant, and nourishing for us.”

For full details on the day's itinerary go to:

<https://manresa-canada.ca/event/mass-alive-yes-mass-really-alive/>

The Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will take place on the first Friday of each month from 4 to 5 p.m. in our church. Eucharistic Adoration is a time for deep prayer, meditation and devotion while in the presence of Christ, through the Eucharist, on display on the altar in our church's beautiful sunburst monstrance.

Health and Wellness Corner

By Health co-chairs Geri Crisci and Krysia Theriault

What would you say is the #1 key to a happy life?

If you answered: career achievement, money, success, exercise, travelling, or a healthy diet you would be incorrect!

A very interesting study was begun in 1938 at the Harvard Medical School, reviewing the health records of 724 people from all over the world. These participants were asked detailed questions about their lives at 2 year intervals. The most consistent finding of this 85 year old study was that positive relationships keep us happier, healthier and help us live longer!

We have touched on many of these ideas throughout the Mental Health and Wellness column, so some of this will sound familiar to you.

Relationships affect us physically, (consider what happens to your body when you're in conflict with someone you love), emotionally, behaviourally and spiritually. For these reasons the concept of “social fitness” has gained momentum recently. According to researchers Robert Waldinger, MD and Marc Shulz, PhD, both of the Harvard Medical School, our social lives are “living systems” requiring exercise. The researchers encourage us to “take stock” of our relationships. They encourage us to be honest with ourselves about where we're devoting our time and whether we are tending to the connections that help us thrive.

Seven keystones of support are considered:

1. Safety and Security (who would you call if you woke up scared in the middle of the night?)
2. Learning and Growth (who encourages you to try new things and pursue your life goals?)
3. Emotional Closeness and Confiding (who knows the most about you, who can you turn to when feeling sad, and then be honest with how you're really feeling?)

4. Identity Affirmation and Shared Experience (someone who has shared experience with you and encourages you to strengthen your sense of self?)
5. Romantic Intimacy (do you feel satisfied with the emotional intimacy in your life?)
6. Help - both Informational and Practical (who do you turn to when you need expertise or practical help?)
7. Fun and Relaxation (who makes you laugh? (who do you call to see a movie? Who makes you feel at ease?)

It's never too late to deepen a connection. How? Ask a thoughtful question or pay closer attention when a friend is talking to you.

We hope you find these interesting suggestions by the authors to be useful in "taking stock" of your social relationships; of "exercising" your connections.

All of us will likely see areas we'd like to strengthen!
All feedback welcome!

Geri and Krysia

Club Sandwich

After our January meeting members got busy making sandwiches for Club Sandwich Toronto, a grass roots community group "sandwiching" the meal gap by providing homemade sandwiches for 9 east end missions for the homeless and food insecure. And make sandwiches we did – 130 of them! We set up an assembly line that started with buttering and finishing with labeling each individually wrapped sandwich. We had bought loaves and buns, cold cuts and cheese, peanut butter and jam and different condiments. A big special thank you goes out to a friend of Maryse – Andrea Michailoff for her very generous donation of breads, homemade egg and tuna salads plus a supply of sandwich fillers similar to ours and condiments – greatly appreciated Andrea! All sandwiches were delivered to the Club Sandwich community space in Glen Rhodes United Church by Maryse.



Come Sing

Your St. John's Choir is seeking new members! Ideally, if you have previously sung in a choir and enjoy praising the Lord in song, you would make a welcome addition to our choir. Altos, tenors and basses are most welcome and of course sopranos too! Choir practice takes place weekly (September-June) on Thursdays from 7:30 pm to 9 pm, with singing at the 11 am Mass. Interested? Contact choir director Eric Walker at ejwalker@sympatico.ca or speak to any choir member, several of which are CWL members.

2023 Membership Drive

The annual membership fee has increased to \$35.

There is confidential assistance for any woman needing help to pay her membership - please contact Maryse maryse.ristuccia@gmail.com

Any female 16 yrs or older is welcome to join!

The annual fee can be paid in one of the following ways:

By e-transfer to our new council account at:

jaybeescwl@gmail.com or a cheque sent by regular mail to Maryse's address below or drop off a cheque or cash payment into her mailbox or Carmen's mailbox:

Maryse Ristuccia

87 Coalport Dr.

Scarborough, M1N 4B5

Carmen's mailbox – 66A Osborne Ave.

Cheques are payable to "St. John's CWL".

Please be sure to include your name, address, phone number and email address so we can update our records. Please PRINT.

The name and number of a contact person in case of emergency or difficulty reaching you would also be appreciated.

If these payment methods are not convenient for you, contact Maryse to pick your payment up:

maryse.ristuccia@gmail.com

Calendar

March 3rd – World Day of Prayer

March 5th – CWL General Meeting in the Hall

March 8th – World Day of Women

March 10th – CWL Mary's Way of The Cross in the church at 7:00 p.m.

March 17th – St. Patrick's Day

March 19th – Feast day of St. Joseph

March 22nd – World Day of Water

March 23rd – Healing Mass in the church at 7:30 p.m.

March 25th – CWL Soda Bread fundraiser after each

Mass in the church vestibule
March 26th – Earth Hour 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

February Celebrations!



Happy birthday to everyone celebrating a birthday this month including:

- **Lisa Ricciardelli** on the 4th!
- **Karen Eckert** on the 4th!
- **Celestine Hall** on the 21st!
- **Carmen Vanderreest** on the 24th!

Virtue of the Month

From the Toronto Catholic District School Board:
February virtue is Love.

- “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” (1 John 4:8)
- “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13)
- “Listen with the ear of your heart.” (St. Benedict)
- “...Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” (Martin Luther King)
- “Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength while loving someone deeply gives you courage.” (Lao Tzu)



50/50 Lottery

Tickets are now on sale for the 2023 Knights of Columbus 50/50 draw in support of Ontario Food Banks and the Special Olympics. There are four quarterly draws and the next one will be on **April 30th** – jackpot is based on total ticket sales and there are two early bird draws set for March 1st and April 1st.

Tickets are 15 for \$10, 40 for \$20 or 100 for \$40 for each quarterly draw. Ticket numbers are computer generated and emailed to the buyer.

When ordering tickets there is a drop-down menu under “Organization” to choose the parish council you support – St. John’s Council number is “Scarborough Beaches 7008”.

For full details and to purchase your tickets go to:

<https://www.kofcontario5050.com>

Milk Bag Project

We have 3 members crocheting milk bags into mats for the homeless! Please fold or roll clean and dry outer milk bags together instead of crinkling them up. This makes it easier for the cutting process.

Any that you have collected can be dropped off to the front porch of either:

Maryse’s house at **87 Coalport Drive**

Carmen’s house at **66A Osborne Ave.**

Catholic Family Services

A wide variety of programs and services are offered through Catholic Family Services of Toronto. Their counsellors “are prepared to work with the needs, strengths, values, and goals of individuals and families. We also recognise and sensitively respond to differences in cultural, racial, gender, and religious backgrounds of clients.”

Please call **416-921-1163** (Central Toronto office) or **416-222-0048** (North Toronto office) and leave a message with your name and contact information.

A staff person will contact you and provide you with further information.” You can also send an email to this email address: info@cfstoronto.com

FEE FOR SERVICE:

Counselling fees are charged according to a client’s income level. No one is denied service because of his/her inability to pay fees.” For more info go to:

<https://www.cfstoronto.com>

CWL Bursaries

CWL’s National Bursary Fund was established in 1990 and provides members with financial assistance while pursuing studies, courses, seminars, workshops and diploma/degree programs in areas of, spiritual growth, adult faith formation, youth ministry, ministry to patients in palliative care, ministry to shut-ins, parliamentary procedure, and literacy tutoring.

New this year! The addition of education toward a nursing degree!

Deadline to apply is May 15th. Members use this bursary opportunity to take online courses and workshops. One thousand dollars can be awarded per year to a maximum of \$4,000 in a member’s lifetime. Refer to item #552 on the League’s national website for criteria and application information. The League brochure is found at:

<https://cwl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/312-National-Bursary-Fund-Brochure-2019.pdf>

CWL National Webpage

In ongoing efforts to inspire you in faith, service and social justice the League is happy to introduce a new permanent webpage that has been added to the CWL national website. "To Inspire" is the home for inspirational messaging and videos promoting the League: <https://cwl.ca/to-inspire/>

WUCWO

The Catholic Women's League of Canada (CWL) is officially recognized by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCC) as a lay association of women and is affiliated with the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO), a world-wide federation holding membership in the conference of International Catholic Organizations. Go to this link to discover all that WUCWO does and to read their monthly newsletter:

<https://www.wucwo.org/index.php/en/>

The CWL & Canadian Blood Services



There is an immediate need for new and returning blood donors!

The urgent need for blood, platelet and plasma continues across our healthcare system.

There are 31,000 fewer active donors than at the beginning of the pandemic – this is the greatest decline in numbers in a decade.

There are three permanent Canadian Blood Service centers in Toronto: 2 Bloor Street East, 67 College Street, and 163 King Street West. If you're in good health, please visit blood.ca to book an appointment and for the latest updates.

Everyone has the privilege to donate blood and encourage others to donate. CWL members are asked to give the gift of life and to register with Canadian Blood Services "Partners for Life" program using the League's unique Partner ID **CATH011269** to record donations.

For information on Blood Services go to:

<https://www.blood.ca/en>

Genetics

On the topic of Genetics, you can monitor and study the advantages / disadvantages of scientific developments in light of teachings of the Catholic Church through the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute (CCBI). Current information is available regularly on the CCBI website.

<http://www.ccbi-utoronto.ca/>

St. John's CWL Council Contact Information

Maryse Ristuccia:

maryse.ristuccia@gmail.com 437-983-0557

Celestine Hall:

cf.hall@sympatico.ca 416-694-8922

Joan Beal:

joanbeal@rogers.com 416-693-4255

Karen Eckert

Eckertk@bell.net 416-702-7891

Corinne Santianni:

zed28@rogers.com 416-436-0300

Jenni Commanda:

laughterseasoning@bell.net 647-346-2040

Dorothy Currie:

dorothy.ghosh@yahoo.com 416-804-1793

Krysia Theriault:

krysiatheriault@gmail.com 416-686-2742

Geri Crisci:

gcrisci@ckmconsultation.com 416-697-4544

Carmen Vanderreest:

vanderreestcarmen@gmail.com 416-691-5165