

St. John's Catholic Women's League (CWL) Newsletter Community in Action



January 2022

Transitional Executive

President: Maryse Ristuccia Secretary: Celestine Hall Treasurer: Joan Beal Spiritual Development:

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
Provincial: www.cwl.on.ca
Diocesan: www.cwltoronto.ca

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 new website for all matters relating to our church. Use it to register for Masses and Confessions (after 11:00 a.m. each Tuesday). It has links to the weekly Bulletin and many other great resources for our parish as well as for the Archdiocese.

Parish YouTube Channel

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8pLWrdARlezR MzjHZJv9aQ

Use this link to view all videos posted by our church including Sunday Masses. Be sure to "like" the channel!

Next Meeting

We are resuming meetings via Zoom due to pandemic restrictions. Our next meeting will be held Monday, January 24th at 7:30 p.m. Link information will be emailed in advance. We also hope to offer online presentations. We will keep you posted.

Pray the Rosary

Friday Night Rosary is back with a new start time - 8 pm! The first Rosary of this new year was prayed for the intentions of our CWL sister Ulrike Licht whose health is in decline. Uli and her family were very uplifted in knowing that we prayed for them during this difficult time. A brief message from her reads, "Thank you so much, words cannot express my gratitude. Thank you." It was great to see some new faces on screen and to hear that others who could not join in prayed at home for this intention. Prayers matter, prayers support and uplift. Keep them going and if you have a special prayer request for our Rosary night please let Maryse or Carmen know. We pray the Rosary every Friday evening at 8:00 p.m. online via Zoom. 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. This link below is the same link used every Friday.

https://zoom.us/j/94327881622?pwd=UWpCTjR4cjFldG c5Yjk4bE5nbEg0dz09

If needed: Meeting ID: 943 2788 1622

Passcode: 263230

Prayers

Let us remember these fellow sisters in our prayers: Noreen Boyle Ulrike Licht Jennifer

Carmel Richard Marlene Libbus

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

Message from Maryse

Happy New Year to all my CWL sisters and your families. I hope that the start to the New Year has begun in a joyful way despite the entire crazy world around us with this never-ending pandemic. Pray my sisters that no matter what happens you will always keep a hopeful heart and look for the good around us.

Our new National CWL theme for the next two years is "Catholic and Living It!" This theme calls us to renew our commitment to act and make our world better one small action at a time. There is a quote on the

CWL's national website that made me stop and nod my head in agreement. Although we have been held back in so many ways by the pandemic we need to continue stepping forward and putting our faith into action. The quote is from St. Vincent Palloti: "Remember that the Christian life is one of action, not of speech and daydream. Let there be few words and many deeds, and let them be done well." Yes, yes! Let's keep acting on our faith in all the ways we can. Let's do it! Find a cause, find a project, we need not wait until the pandemic is over. Let's all work together to be Catholic and Living It every single way that we can.

National Theme Prayer

Loving Father, open our hearts to your infinite love for all people, and to your presence with us wherever we go in your name.

Lord Jesus, deepen the spiritual life of the Catholic Women's League. Strengthen the faith and good works of our members, building-up life in the world by being Catholic and Living It!

May we imitate you with works of mercy, welcoming the forgotten, suffering or vulnerable wherever we encounter them.

Holy Spirit, strengthen us to live our faith, witnessing to life, peace and social justice daily wherever we are in Canada.

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel, may we be joyful and responsive to our Christian calling, by truly being Catholic and Living It!

We make this prayer through Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen

Message from Fr. John-Mark

"So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." (Matthew 6:34) All the Christmas trappings have been put away, and we find ourselves in that part of the Church's year known as "Ordinary Time". It is a time to walk with the Lord through his ministry on earth, following him as disciples around the Galilee of our homes, our schools, our workplaces and our neighbourhoods. Every time we hear of Jesus healing, teaching, and merely being among his friends, we can imagine him here with us at every turn, in the ordinary circumstances of everyday life. Finding the Lord every day in something ordinary is part of the joy of the believer. In Ordinary Time, we might focus our prayers on living in the present moment, not being too

distracted by the mistakes of yesterday and the uncertainties of the future. These are two really big distractions when it comes to living in the freedom of the children of God. We might try to spend time in prayer, just staying present to the Lord, and before you know it, some past mistake comes to mind, some regret, some guilt over things unfinished or unaccomplished, and our present peace is gone; or, in the other direction of time, we immediately think of something looming in a day or an hour down the road, and the dread of what might happen shatters the peace we seek by resting in the Lord. But all we have to do is call on the Lord, and say, "Lord Jesus, you are Lord of my life, and Lord of all time. Let me not dwell on the past or fear the future. Jesus, I trust in you." Trust is sometimes all it takes, to live in the present moment, and receive the grace of spending just a few moments with the Lord in present peace. It might be a New Year's resolution worth considering.

2022 Membership

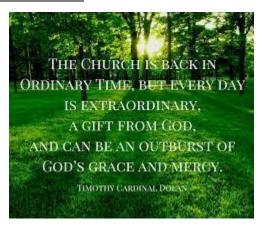
Although we face another uncertain year, 2022 membership is underway! Annual dues must be paid now! Any female 16 yrs or older is welcome to join! In the absence of any in-person contact due to pandemic restrictions you can pay the \$25 annual fee in one of the following ways: e-transfer to Linda Duke at lajduke@rogers.com or mail or drop off a cheque to Maryse Ristuccia at 87 Coalport Dr. or to Carmen Vanderreest at 66A Osborne Ave. - cheque payable to "St. John's CWL". If either of these methods is not convenient for you, contact Maryse to pick your payment up: maryse.ristuccia@gmail.com
We look forward to your continued 'yes' as we move into our 71st year as a council!

Still Looking - Still Needed

We welcome members Celestine Hall as our new Secretary and Joan Beal as our new Treasurer! With one position left to fill we hope there is a member interested in taking on our Spiritual Development chair position. Is it you?!

Executive positions are very important to our council but are not overly time consuming. We work together and provide lots of support. Please consider stepping up for this role. If you wish to discuss what the role entails, please contact Maryse or go to this link: https://ottawa.cwl.on.ca/files/1%20Duties%20of%20them20Officers%20Answers.pdf

Spiritual Reflection



Spiritual Development

Happy New Year to all! As we enter Ordinary Time on the liturgical calendar let's try to keep it anything but ordinary. Because the term ordinary in English most often means something that's not special or distinctive, many people think that Ordinary Time refers to parts of the calendar of the Catholic Church that are unimportant. Even though the season of Ordinary Time makes up most of the liturgical year in the Catholic Church, the fact that Ordinary Time refers to those periods that fall outside of the major liturgical seasons reinforces this impression. Yet, Ordinary Time is far from unimportant or uninteresting. Ordinary Time is called "ordinary" not because it is common but simply because the weeks of Ordinary Time are numbered. The Latin word ordinalis, which refers to numbers in a series, stems from the Latin word ordo, from which we get the English word order. So, the numbered weeks of Ordinary Time, in fact, represent the ordered life of the Church—the period in which we live our lives neither in feasting (as in the Christmas and Easter seasons) or in more severe penance (as in Advent and Lent), but in watchfulness and expectation of the Second Coming of Christ. During Ordinary Time the vestments are green; green is the colour that we associate with nature and growth. This is a time that we can grow in our faith and the green is a reminder to nurture the Spirit living within us. Ordinary Time: continuous growth on our faith journey. Nothing ordinary about it!

Christmas Gifts

Each year at Christmas the CWL gifts our pastor and deacon. At his request, our gift to Deacon Paul was a financial donation in his name to the Sisters of Life. We are aware of Fr. John-Mark's fondness for song birds so reached out to member and artist Maria Wong for her help. She created a lovely artistic piece of a male house sparrow. Short on time to have it properly

framed, it was presented to Fr. John-Mark for Christmas but we have taken it back for the framing.



Maria Wong with her artwork



Fr. John-Mark receiving his Christmas gift

Requested Mass

The morning Mass held on Tuesday, January 18th was requested by member Béatrice Kouamé for all members of our CWL council here at St. John's. Beatrice has moved from our parish but still maintains her membership with us.

After requesting the Mass, Béatrice wrote: "I thought the best way to express my gratitude to each one of you for your love and kindness is to ask God Himself to bless you in a special way, as we begin the New Year!"

Fighting the January / Winter Blues

In continuing to connect with each other through our stories while kept apart we noted the 'January blues' and 'winter doldrums' are upon us, so we asked members what they do to fight back! How do they overcome the sluggishness, the drowsy days, the moodiness and the carbohydrates! Here's what members shared:

Norma McCleverty was first to write: "With the second year of the "January Blahs" creeping up, further determination, planning and hoping seems just that

little bit more necessary. I began the year with a Novena for patience, acceptance and loads of hope. I have taken a good look at my dinner menus and am introducing some new recipes and trying some new vegetables. I had successes with mini bok choy and Chinese eggplant, but kale not so much! Very important to me are my daily neighbourhood walks. Mobility issues necessitate two smaller walks rather than a bigger one. If the sun is shining, I make sure I'm outside dressed warmly to enjoy that gift. House cleaning? Well.......

I'm allowing myself some down time with a book most afternoons being careful not to fall asleep! I'm continuing journaling and have written notes to family and friends (snail mail!). I try to do two what I call productive chores each day, i.e. laundry, sponging the floors, the never ending pile of paperwork, etc."

Monique Hroch shared this: "I have always been an avid sewer, (I am a seamstress by trade) and since Covid I have taken up machine quilting. I love putting different fabrics together to create new designs. I've made a quilt, table runner, a pillow and "rug mugs". This cold month of January I have been working on a technique called "paper piecing" and have made these 2 penguin rug mugs. This hobby keeps my mind and creativity active. I love it!"



2 'rug mugs' made by Monique Hroch Rug mugs are like small place mats used for snacks or tea / coffee time!

Maryse Ristuccia wrote: "The winter blahs, for me, set in when that horrible time change begins at the end of October. As November moves along it gets worse! I absolutely hate that it is dark at 4:30! I keep busy during dinner preparation but as soon as I finish my dinner, by 8:00 p.m. all I can think about is going to

bed. It seems that every ten minutes or so I say to my hubby, 'can I go to bed now?'. November drags along and no matter what I try to do, all those grey days and damp weather really get me down. We try to keep to our daily walking schedule but many mornings, I really can't push myself out the door.

As December comes and the preparations for Christmas begin I perk up until January 6th when the season ends. By that date the days are a little bit longer each day and this lifts me up. I pack up the Christmas things and then I become energized to clean out a closet and organize my house a bit. The extra bits of daylight each day give me hope that we are getting closer to spring. For me, dispelling my winter blahs is putting on some great music and decluttering. It is as if my brain wants to do spring cleaning so that it will, in turn, bring spring that much earlier. Wow! Yesterday, it was 5:45 p.m. and there was still some light in the sky.

There is light at the end of the tunnel!"

After a second email request asking for stories was sent out, Geri Crisci responded with this: "I can't help but wonder if the lack of response to your request is precisely because of the doldrums of winter!" © Geri also wrote: "I think of winter as a time of recuperation, particularly January to early March. We have completed a year, holidays (such as they are during a pandemic) and are given winter as a time of reflection and replenishment. I like to go outside to walk daily (except last week of minus 20 wind chills!). Even a short walk around the neighborhood is refreshing. I may see a neighbor, a dog, hear or see the birds and squirrels, all of which give me a chance to be grateful for the day. Not everyone has the ability or privilege to bundle up and walk; I am aware of how each of us has to look at what we can do and with support from those who care about us, take one step at a time.

I do like to do small household projects (which I certainly do not want to stay in the house to do during nice weather!). I also make it a point to choose to cook, purchase or bake a special treat once a week, comforting! Ice cream works for many people, but my lactose intolerant body prohibits that particular enjoyment. I like to read and like to watch movies. I also look for the 2½ additional minutes of daylight at the end of each day, and am very focused on the countdown to Daylight Savings time (a mere 53 days away).

Prayer for those struggling with physical, emotional and spiritual challenges is also a part of my daily routine. For many years, I have read material by Joyce Meier; a Bible teacher who is a prolific writer. I find her words

clear, understandable and helpful, in understanding God's direction for each of us. She has a number of Daily Reading books which I find a great way to start my days. Just a page of inspiration and direction for each day can provide a half hour meditation.

When I start to feel really sorry for myself, I remember all those who are struggling with real life issues, and give my head a shake (without causing whiplash, of course!). Reaching out with a phone call to one of my relatives or friends or neighbours whom I haven't talked to in a while is also a good strategy for me. In other words, thinking of someone else, instead of myself! Some people have hobbies which interest them. I like interior design, so watch HGTV to keep that interest going. I particularly enjoy "Love It or List it Vancouver". Bottom line, especially during these unusual times, is that I can't control the many external events happening out there; HOWEVER, I can control my reaction to those things. I can work on my inner locus of control; the knowledge of God's love for me, and all the many blessings in my life. Like you, sisters, for example! I also remind myself that 'as I think, so I will feel and behave' (Proverbs and in modern mental health language: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy)." Geri also sent this reading from Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 (KJV)

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

a time to be born and a time to die,

a time to plant and a time to uproot,

a time to kill and a time to heal,

a time to tear down and a time to build,

a time to weep and a time to laugh,

a time to mourn and a time to dance,

a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,

a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,

a time to search and a time to give up,

a time to keep and a time to throw away,

a time to tear and a time to mend,

a time to be silent and a time to speak,

a time to love and a time to hate,

a time for war and a time for peace.

Corinne Santianni had this to share: "What do I do to beat the winter blahs? No matter what the weather, I go outside for 10 to 25 minutes every day. Today, it looks like I may be shoveling snow! I often walk the exact same route, but now I listen to audio books, free from my library. I have found it more challenging to read a book, as I am easily distracted, but I don't find audio books distracting. I even listen when I am preparing dinner or cleaning. The other activity that has given me great pleasure, and I am not sure why, is

cleaning out closets and clothes! Dropping bags off to Goodwill is a sense of accomplishment! It is often a trip down memory lane as well.

Here are my few other activities, each activity once a week. I meditate with a girlfriend who leads, along with another couple, and we always start with a chat about how our week went. Finally, once a week I play Euchre on the Trickster app with three of my girlfriends. I think it is important to be grateful and look forward to something every day, even a cup of coffee! God bless."

Carmen Vanderreest wrote: "Birds, walks, birds, reading, birds, cabin, and did I say birds already? © I am a 'birder' at heart and love watching and listening to them. I bring out my bird feeders on the September long weekend so land birds that migrate into our area have a ready source to re-energize on arrival. As the darker and grey days of winter move in, my days are brightened by watching and studying birds at the feeders through my windows – I have four feeders; one with perches, one with platforms and two different suet feeders - different feeders for different birds. A winter walk through Edwards Gardens, High Park or Rosetta McClain Gardens with some black-oil sunflower seeds will often have the chickadees feeding from your hand! I also seek out the winter water birds that migrate south to our area by taking weekend walks through Tommy Thompson Park (Leslie Street Spit) and early morning walks at Ashbridge's Bay and sometimes I head over to walk along the shores of the Toronto islands. My cabin is my sanity saver. It's a four hour drive northeast from the city's "madding crowd" and is only somewhat insulated against winter. I ignore this and double my socks, bulk up my sweaters, feed the woodstove and read! My insurance company notes that a visit there is required at least every 30 days, even in winter, and I am most happy to oblige! Winter walks in the snow filled woods are the best! The low sun casts such long shadows and there are many different animal tracks meandering between the trees. The silence is worth stopping for and it clears the city from my head. No winter blues here!

January Celebrations!



Happy birthday to everyone celebrating a birthday this month including:

- → Lisa Charette on the 1st
- → Norma McCleverty on the 4th
- → **Jenni Commanda** on the 15th
- → Charmaine Woods on the 20th
- → Eric Walker (Organist) on the 31st

New Year Prayer

At the recent CWL Toronto Diocesan New Year Celebration held online, Msgr. Patrick O'Dea offered this prayer to all CWL members for the new year. He explained he received it many years ago from his mother and he prays it each morning. He offered this prayer instead of a toast because he felt it summed up everything he wanted for members in this new year.

ANOTHER MORNING PRAYER

God of my life,
I welcome this new day.
It is your gift to me,
a new creation,
a promise of resurrection.

I thank you for the grace of being alive this morning.
I thank you for the sleep that has refreshed me.
I thank you for this chance
to make a new beginning.

This day, Lord,
is full of promise and opportunity:
let me waste none of it.
This day is full of mystery and the unknown:
help me to face it without fear and anxiety.
This day is blessed with beauty and adventure:
make me fully alive to it all.

During this day
keep me thoughtful, prayerful, and kind.
May I be courteous and helpful to others,
and not turned in on myself.
Keep me from any word or deed
that would hurt, or belittle, or destroy.
and may the thoughts of my mind
be pleasing in your sight.

When night comes again,
may I look back on this day
with no grievance or bitterness in my heart.
And may nobody be unhappy
because of anything I have done
or anything I have failed to do.
Lord, bless this day for me and for everyone.
Make it a day in which we grow
to have the mind of Christ your Son.

Lord Jesus Christ, Friend and Brother, may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen

Knights of Columbus Lottery

The Knights of Columbus continue to fundraise for their Ontario Charities Foundation through an online 50/50 lottery for 2022. 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. The first quarter jackpot draw takes place March 31st with 2 early bird draws on February 1st and March 1st. The payout prize grows daily based on ticket sales. Currently, it stands at over \$6,300! When ordering, 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://ontariokofc.ca/programs/50-50-raffle

Calendar

January 24th – St. John's CWL General Meeting January 26th – Bell Let's Talk Day February 11th – World Day of the Sick February 12th – Toronto Diocesan CWL Development Day

Catholic Family Services

A wide variety of programs and services are offered through Catholic Family Services of Toronto. Due to the pandemic they have moved to online assistance. 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 main 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

Virtue of the Month

From the Toronto Catholic District School Board: January's virtue is Courage.

"In an age which seems more fearful of the future, we are directed to give an account of the hope that is within us. " (1 Peter 3:15)

- "Do not be afraid, for I am with you." (Isaiah 41:10)
- "May I have the courage today...to postpone my dreams no longer." John O'Donohue, Irish poet and author
- "It's better to be a lion for a day than a sheep all your life." Elizabeth Kenny, Australian nursing sister

Milk Bag Project Back On!

Maryse has found a crocheting partner in member Charmaine Woods so collecting **clean and dry outer milk bags** is back on! Please <u>fold or roll</u> the bags together instead of crinkling them up to make it easier for the cutting process.

Any that you have can be dropped off to the porches at either:

Maryse's house at **87 Coalport Drive** or Carmen's house at **66A Osborne Ave.**

Maryse is still asking for more members to help with the crocheting, it is a very simple chain stitch and says help would be most appreciated. Please email Maryse at: maryse.ristuccia@gmail.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. 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/

The CWL & Canadian Blood Services



Canadian Blood Services is always in need of blood donations.

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/

WUCWO

The Catholic Women's League of Canada (CWL) is officially recognized by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) 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.

Click here to discover all that WUCWO does and to read their monthly newsletter:

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

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