

## **Provincial Convention, Community Life Report - Joanna Sisk**

Devotion to Mary Undoer of Knots, has become more popular since Pope Frances encouraged this devotion, in Argentina and spoke about it during his first year as Pope.

Throughout time, a knot has been used to symbolize tension and struggle. The undoing of a knot symbolizes freedom from these burdens - a release of pressure.

The image of Mary Undoer of Knots, working to untie a cord filled with knots and tangles, can represent the difficulties in our lives; physical, mental and spiritual.

Think of a chain necklace; how easily it can be knotted and tangled and how difficult it can be to pick apart the tangles; often leading us to discard it.

Think of Mary Undoer of Knots; sometimes the knots and tangles of our lives become so entangled, we think that it is hopeless to try to untangle them. We can bring our own problems to Mary, asking her to carefully pick them apart. Picture Mary patiently and tirelessly undoing the knot. This picture can apply to the homeless.

We know that homelessness is complex and complicated. This knot of homelessness may be comprised of the issues of unemployment, mental illness, addictions, isolation, loss of relationships with family and/or friends, fear, being the victim of trafficking, disrespect, violence, apathy and the absence of peace.

Whatever the causes, the knot(s) become so entangled, that homeless people fall into despair, that may never be undone, and they give up trying to untangle their lives.

The homeless feel trapped, caught in a tangled web, not understanding or not seeing what to do; unable to act or act compulsively ending up worse off. As the knots are tightened and not seeing a way out, they drift and often become depressed

Our provincial president, observed a huge knot, homelessness. As members of The Catholic Women's League, in Ontario, we have reached out to help untangle this huge knot.

Through education and support, we have had speakers on homelessness, have read and shared articles and visited and volunteered at agencies etc.

We came to understand that the homeless can be neighbours, seniors living alone or in retirement or assisted care facilities, as well as the street person.

We have given support, through our cash donations to agencies, had food drives, gathered clothing, bedding, purses filled with toiletries and personal care products, and collected \$5.00 gift cards to give the homeless, hoping to give them more than \$5., but help them to retain their dignity.

We acknowledge the homeless as real people, when we respect them by giving them a smile, saying hello and perhaps even listening to their stories.

In Ontario, we also learned how our used stamps and air miles card could help abroad and at home.

Mary Undoers of Knots, is ready to untangle all our knots.

So, it is through a prayerful, reflective stance, of holding this knot, of the complexities of our lives and the lives of the homeless, that we say, Mary Undoer of Knots, pray for us.