



December 2018 Edition
 Featuring the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall and
 OPC Recording Secretary, Mary Capobianco
 Inspired by the Spirit, Women Respond to God's Call



Annie's Annotations

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Advent has begun, we are in the season of anticipation for the birth of the Christ Child. I encourage you to go to our website: <http://www.cwl.on.ca> to utilize the beautiful Advent reflections that will be updated each week.

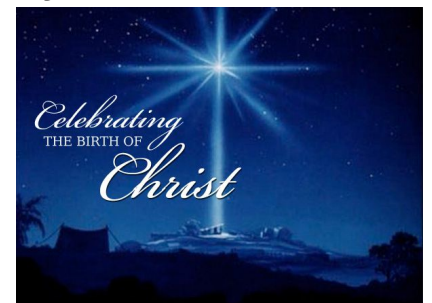
Most of us have so much to be grateful for, remember to include those who are less fortunate in your celebrations and donations. There are many facing plant and company closures and uncertain futures. Please share your love and be generous in gift and prayer.

*May the Christ Child light your days, and warm
your heart and home.*

*May good and faithful friends be found wherever
you may roam.*

*May peace and gladness bless
your little corner of the world,
And may the Christmas season
bring the best to you and yours*

Amen.



May you have a Blessed Christmas and Holy New Year!

News from Alexandria/Cornwall Diocese

Warmth and Comfort Project



With the launching of the Warmth and Comfort Project, Karen Quinn, the Diocesan Community Life Chairperson, wasted no time in sending a letter out to the Catholic School Board. It was then asked that all parishes put out a box at the back of the churches to collect the socks! Total number of socks not yet tallied but from some of the pictures it's been a huge success! Karen is pictured at one of the schools in the Diocese!



Diocesan General Meeting

Our Diocesan general meeting was extra awesome. Melodie Gabriel from CNEWA Canada was our guest speaker. Melodie invited her trustee coworker, Kristen, and together they informed and educated us all about CNEWA Canada - it was so informative. Melodie also spoke to us about her experiences as one of the first 14 lucky participants with The Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation.

Strategic Planning



The Alexandria-Cornwall Diocesan CWL hosted a Strategic Planning Workshop on Thursday, November 22, 2018, 7:00 p.m. at the Agora Centre in Cornwall. Close to 40 members were in attendance and Colleen Perry, Provincial President-Elect, gave a phenomenal presentation.

In liaison with the Service Club of Cornwall and District, The Catholic Women's League of Alexandria/Cornwall continues to work on the Children's Christmas Fund Dinners to help benefit the less fortunate in their Communities!

All these wonderful acts of love, thinking of those who need more attention in the diocese!

- submitted by Lynn Pomainville, Diocesan President, Alexandria-Cornwall

Gift Cards – Thank you!



\$500 in gift cards were donated to **Inn from the Cold**, from the proceeds collected for the Provincial Convention in July, 2018. Martha Berry, Administrative Volunteer Coordinator, writes: "Please let all the ladies know how very much we appreciate the gift cards. They go a long way to support our guests. Being able to give folks a card so they can go somewhere and be warm for a bit makes a huge difference in someone's day. Thank you! "

- submitted by Mary Capobianco, OPC Recording Secretary

OPC Recording Secretary

- submitted by Mary Capobianco

It's hard to believe that the end of another year is just around the corner. At this time of year I find myself reflecting back and my mind is already filled with resolutions for the year to come. Plans to be more organized, more focused, better time management. Promises to myself to finally get to all those projects on my to-do list...and my list goes on.

It's natural that a yearend brings us a "pause point" to take stock and make plans to start anew. A time for personal reflection to plan for the New Year and so we may ask ourselves – What did we learn? What did we accomplish? What did we enjoy doing the most this year? What did we enjoy the least? What would we have done differently? What do we need to spend more time doing? What activities and goals are not getting enough of our time? Perhaps it's spending more time with our families or maybe it's simply being more organized.

The yearend gives us all an opportunity to look back, to remember and to learn. And then to look forward to the amazing new adventures awaiting us in the year ahead.

*"....no eye has seen, no ear has heard,
no mind has conceived
what God has prepared for those who love him..."
1 Corinthians 2-9*

At this most joyous time of year I offer all of you this Christmas Prayer:

*Loving Father,
Help us to remember the birth of Jesus,
That we may share in the song of the angels
The gladness of the shepherds
And the worship of the wise men.
Close the door of hate
And open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
And good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by thy blessing which Christ brings
And teach us to be merry with clear hearts.
May Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children
And Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts.
Amen.*

The Butterfly

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole, until it suddenly stopped making any progress and looked like it was stuck.

So the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily, although it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.

The man didn't think anything of it and sat there waiting for the wings to enlarge to support the butterfly. But that didn't happen. The butterfly spent the rest of its life unable to fly, crawling around with tiny wings and a swollen body.

Despite the kind heart of the man, he didn't understand that the restricting cocoon and the struggle needed by the butterfly to get itself through the small opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings, to prepare itself for flying once it was out of the cocoon.



Moral of the story: Our struggles in life develop our strengths. Without struggles, we never grow and never get stronger, so it's important for us to tackle challenges on our own, and not be relying on help from others.

- Submitted by Anna Tremblay, OPC Spiritual Development Chairperson



Education and Health



This Advent Season put one more thing on your “to do” list. Protect yourself, your family and your friends over this busy season by getting the flu shot.

May you and your family experience joyful anticipation during this Advent Season and have a Happy, Holy Christmas.

- Submitted by: Wilma Vanderzwaag, Ontario Provincial Education and Health Chair.



Sharing Your Gifts

A few days ago I caught an advertisement on television that had an overwhelming effect on me. *Sharing Your Gifts* was produced by Apple to encourage people to use their devices to share their creativity. What makes this so meaningful is that the story of *Sharing Your Gifts* relates directly to each one of us as members of the League. How often do we hide our gifts, afraid to share? Each of us is a special gift, chucked full of wonderful gifts and talents to share.



There are 50 amazing women who are eligible for this year's elections to Ontario Provincial Council. I am in awe of each and everyone one. I see in them what they might not see in themselves. At this moment these women are discerning their call to service. Continue to pray for them as they open their hearts and minds to the Lord's urgings. And for each of you.... Remember – don't hide – share!

(You can view the whole *Sharing Your Gifts* video via YouTube)

- Submitted by Pauline Krupa – OPC Past President/Historian
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Gift Card Initiative



As per the initiative of gift cards for the homeless, St. Kevin's CWL, took on this important cause. This resulted in an amount of \$985.00 donated by the parishioners.

It was decided to give the gift cards to **L'Association des Jeunes de la Rue** in Sudbury. This is a not-for-profit organization offering help to the homeless by providing a wide range of services aimed at intervention, reintegration, social and community re-adaptation. Pictured are Megan O'Byrn, Pat Hinds (St. Kevin's CWL President) and Natasha Edison.

- Submitted by Line Vidal, Communication Chair, St. Kevin's Council, SSM Diocese



"Warmth and Comfort" Project

"Homelessness" is the theme that is being promoted during the second half of this term. With the "Warmth and Comfort" project, we are asking the councils to collect socks – men, women and children; peanut butter jars and boxes of crackers to donate to the homeless shelters in your area. We are hoping that if every council concentrates on this project, we will be able to make a bigger impact as a whole. Please send in pictures of your councils as you donate these items to the food banks and/or homeless shelters in your area. Don't forget to keep track of them and forward final results to be tabulated across the province. Photos will be posted on facebook.



We are hoping that by highlighting the good works of the League, other women will want to join our group, as they see how collectively we can impact the world!

Check out [#opccwlwarmthandcomfortproject](https://www.facebook.com/opccwlwarmthandcomfortproject) for pictures already submitted.

It's not too late...you have until the end of December to make your contribution and tally your contributions for this initiative!



Santa's Christmas Prayer



My dear precious Jesus. I did not mean to take your place. I only bring toys and things and you bring love and grace. People give me lists of wishes and hope that they come true; But you hear prayers of the heart and promise your will to do. Children try to be good and not to cry when I am coming to town; But you love them unconditionally and that love will abound. I leave a bag of toys and temporary joy for a season; But you leave a heart of love, full of purpose and reasons. I have a lot of believers and what one might call fame; But I never healed the blind or tried to help the lame. I have rosy cheeks and a voice full of laughter; But no nail – scarred hands or a promise of the hereafter. You may find several of me in town or at a mall; But there is only one omnipotent you, to answer a sinner's call. And so, my dear precious Jesus, I kneel here to pray, to worship and adore you on this, your holy birthday.

- Submitted by Patricia Rivest, OPC Treasurer



Seniors, Loneliness, and Home Sharing

Some of you may have had the opportunity to attend the HomeShare breakout session at the provincial convention in Toronto. It was one of my choices and it left me with some lasting impressions about the many practical applications afforded by the program. The ability to share expenses or some household chores may allow an individual to continue living safely and affordably in their own home.

But affordability is not the only factor to consider. On the November 09, 2018 episode of "White Coat Black Art" on CBC Radio One, Dr. Brian Goldman touched on a similar program called "Symbiosis". It's a co-housing project run by the school of graduate studies at McMaster University in Hamilton that connects students in need of safe, affordable housing with seniors in local neighbourhoods in need of companionship. The students get affordable rent and in turn help out with some of the household chores, provide companionship and act as a safety net ensuring the senior's safety if a need arises. In this program, companionship is the key factor.

In 2018, the British government announced the establishment of a Ministry of Loneliness to address the strain on the health system caused by more frequent visits to emergency rooms and doctors' offices associated with loneliness. Efforts are under way to draw on the local community and health professionals to become more aware of the needs of these individuals and work out plans to reduce their isolation and hopefully improve health outcomes.

There are very few of us who don't have a personal story about a family member or neighbour in a precarious or vulnerable position in regards to their living accommodations. It may be related to living expenses, inability to continue cooking or cleaning or doing yard work, or being alone and lonely. We aren't always able to find a solution to the housing problem but we can make a point of being more conscious of these situations when they arise. It is said it takes a community to raise a child. It also takes a community to care for our seniors and vulnerable. Will we be able to say our actions helped someone in need?

- Submitted by Pat Weller, OPC Sub-committee Christian Family Life

Blessing of a Christmas Creche or Manger Scene



God of Mary and Joseph, of shepherds and animals, bless us whenever we gaze on this manger scene.

Through all the days of Christmas may these figures tell the story of how humans, angels, and animals found the Christ in this poor place.

Fill our house with hospitality, joy, gentleness, and thanksgiving and guide our steps in the way of peace.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

From Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers

Blessing of the Christmas Ornaments



Each Christmas ornament tells a story and carries a blessing. To counter the typical frantic rush of the season, let the Christmas tree stand bare for a week and then bless the ornaments while placing them on the tree. This is a good way to observe how Advent is a time of anticipation and longing.

Have each family member choose a favorite ornament and hold it. Select someone or ask someone to volunteer in leading the following blessing.

Leader: God, we ask you to bless these ornaments. Each one of these represents a thread in the tapestry of our family's life together. We gather today to be mindful of how you have been present with us through all our days. We know that you are present with us now as our family story continues to unfold. Help us to see one another as precious and dear, to treat one another with tenderness and care, and to enjoy and celebrate the joy that each one of us brings to the family. We ask you this in a spirit of memory and celebration.

All: Amen.

(After the blessing, your family might take time to share stories connected to some favorite ornaments.)

<https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/family/holidays-and-special-occasions/advent-and-christmas/blessing-the-christmas-ornaments>

- Submitted by Anna Tremblay, OPC Spiritual Development Chairperson