



June 2020 Edition

Featuring the Diocese of Ottawa and
OPC Christian Family Life Chair, Colleen Martin

"Care for our Common Home"



Colleen's Communications

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For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

Jeremiah 29:11-14

What have you been doing during this time of isolation? I have been praying; praying for all of you. These are such troubled times. So many people are feeling the stress of being alone. We are human so we need that physical contact; that loving touch on the shoulder; that hug from a friend; holding hands with your grandchildren; reminiscing with your parents and grandparents. We need all of that.

For reasons that only God knows we have been asked to isolate to stay safe from this virus. I think God had another plan. I believe that God gave us the opportunity to spend more time with Him - an opportunity to get to know Him better. My parents and I spend more time in prayer together. We watch online mass together every Sunday from our own parish. It is a joy to participate.

Your Ontario Provincial team is meeting monthly by conference call to touch base and provide support if needed. We miss being together. Many members across the province

are finding unique ways of gathering virtually. It is exciting times. Nothing, though, can replace the hugs and laughter of our sisters in the League.

Keep the faith, be safe and healthy, know that you are in my prayers... until we meet again



Yours in faith,
Colleen



Before It Is Too Late

If you have a tender message,
Or a loving word to say,
Do not wait till you forget it,
But whisper it today,
The tender word unspoken,
The letter never sent,
The long-forgotten messages,
The wealth of love unspent –
For these some hearts are breaking,
For these some loved ones wait.
So, show them that you care for
them
Before it is too late

~ Frank Herbert Sweet

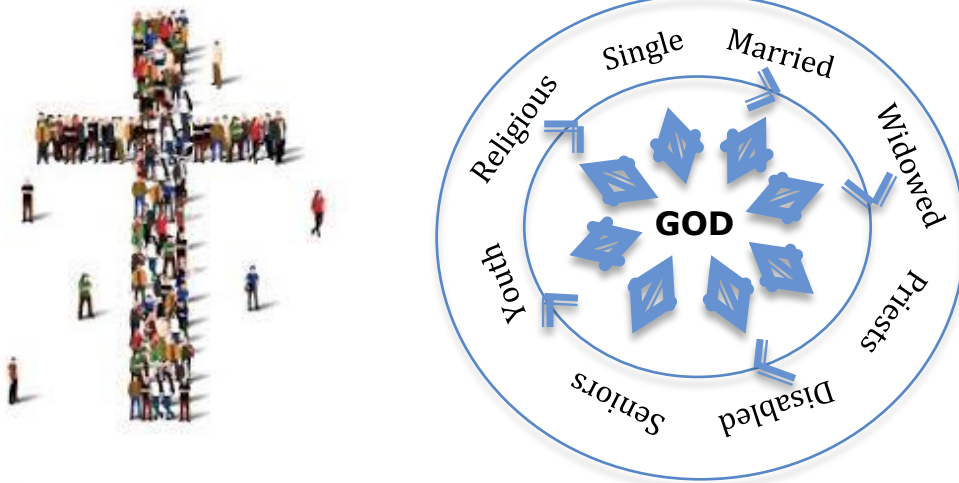


.....Submitted by Linda Squarzolo, OPC President-Elect/Organization Chair



Christian Family Life Standing Committee

Catholic Living ... It is all about relationships



Catholic Living in a Pandemic

Comforting words from the Pope ... The creativity of the Christian needs to show forth in opening up new horizons, opening windows, opening transcendence towards God and towards people, and in creating new ways of being at home. It's not easy to be confined to your house. What comes to my mind is a verse from the Aeneid in the midst of defeat: the counsel is not to give up, but save yourself for better times, for in those times remembering what has happened will help us. Take care of yourselves for a future that will come. And remembering in that future what has happened will do you good. (The Creativity of the Christian, Extract from an interview by Austen Ivereigh (The Tablet) with Pope Francis)

Relationships are more important than ever

Be sure to reach out to those you know isolating alone... your parish priest, widowed members of your parish, international students in your parish or wider community, disabled who may require assistance with groceries or advocacy to access health services and so many more.

It is so important to maintain our joyful living as Christians. Despite the challenges, it is important to maintain our connection to parish family and a well-balanced life of emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical activity and growth. This blog has some excellent advice ... <https://teleperformanceblog.com/people-strategy/maintaining-balance-and-emotional-well-being-during-covid-19/>

Consider speaking up

The family is constantly under attack. As I prepare this article, a new reality television show is preparing for broadcast where the primary participant will "win the opportunity to make a baby." Hearing this was shocking and reminded me that we need to speak up. Look at this website to see how to speak up against things you see on TV and hear on Radio that you object to https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/info_sht/g8.htm.

.....Submitted by Colleen, OPC Christian Family Chair



Ottawa Diocesan Council



Across the country and around the world, we are being challenged in a way we never have been challenged before. Current federal and provincial guidelines have made it almost impossible to do any meaningful business in the CWL bringing us to a standstill. In this situation, it is helpful to reflect on the life of Jesus of Nazareth. While he was living among us, he was able to work within the restrictions of the world he lived in and show us radical new ways of being. We too need to be radical.

Isaiah also had something to tell us when he said, *"Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"* (Isa 43:18-19). Now is the time to let go of what we have lost and be creative. Now is the time for new growth inspired by our love of the Lord and desire to do his work. Growth always begins at the very lowest levels, so we need to encourage this growth because it is the foundation of our future.

In Ottawa, I have been completely astounded at what has emerged from members at the parish level in response to the pandemic. Far from being slowed down by restrictions, members are rising to the challenge put before them. We still have a long way to go to adapt to the new reality, but I thought I would describe some of the things that have been happening in the diocese over the last three months. More in depth articles about all the activities in Ottawa can be found in our latest *Faith In Action Newsletter* which is available on our diocesan website <http://www.ottawa.cwl.on.ca/>.

Information on the 2021 Ontario Provincial Convention which will be held in Ottawa is also posted on the website.

Ottawa remains hopeful that we will prevail as sisters of the League united in Christ. May the light of hope also ignite in all our members across the province and the nation.

Love, peace, and joy,
Lynn Lavictoire, President

DIOCESAN EVENTS



Annual Diocesan advent retreat, November 2019, hosted by Divine Infant Parish Council. The guest speaker was, Dr. Carol Kuzmochka. Her theme for the day was "Christ, the Light in Our Darkness."

League Development Day held in February, hosted by St. Bernard Parish Council.



Councils News:



St. Margaret Mary Council (Cumberland) celebrated their 70th Anniversary on Sunday, October 6, 2019. Ottawa Diocesan President Lynn Lavictoire presented the 70th Anniversary Certificate and a letter from our Ontario Provincial President Colleen Perry to St. Margaret Mary Past President Marie-Claire Patterson.

St. Philip Council:

For the Parish 200th Anniversary Year in June 2019, CWL members performed all the ministries during the mass. At the end of the mass Spiritual Advisor Fr. Bob Poole blessed the members, service pins were given out to the members from 10 years' service to 30 years.



St. Patrick Council (Fallowfield)

celebrated Council Anniversary on October 20, 2019 with a beautiful Mass at the Parish, followed by High Tea.

Annunciation of the Lord Council:

The Youville Centre in Ottawa offers pregnant or parenting teen mothers the opportunity to complete their high school requirements while providing childcare facilities. Last year, the council took on the responsibility of raising funds to furnish a new space at the Youville Centre for childcare. The goal was to raise \$15,000. Prayer shawls are given to parishioners in times of solace and celebration to first-time moms when their babies are baptized.



Holy Redeemer Council: At our Christmas Potluck in December 2019, President Sharon Sudsbear presented long-time CWL member Shirley Sarrazin with her 60-year service pin! Shirley was also presented the Maple Leaf Service pin in recognition of her outstanding dedication to the Parish community.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Council:

Over sixteen years ago, the council approached the principal of Assumption School for permission to come once a month to recite the Rosary with the school children. The principal was really in favour of the CWL doing it and so it began. It has continued once a month since then and the results have been amazing. The members have been constantly making masks for front line workers during the coronavirus. During the month of May, special prayers were said for the intention of more priests in Canada.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Council:

The council had a very busy year focusing on raising monies for the three bursaries that are awarded to grade twelve students. The recipients of the bursary should be in good academic standing and exhibited life affirming values. Usually the bursary is presented in person to the recipients, but this year they will be mailed out. The council is grateful that the current situation of the pandemic had little effect on attaining this year's goal.

St. Bernard Council: When CTV News Ottawa, ran a story on fire victims living in tents in an Ottawa wooded area after they were left homeless from a rooming house fire, Colleen Perry turned to her council. The CWL members initiated the "Poverty Socks" campaign and along with St. Bernard parishioners collected 655 hats, mittens, and socks. This overwhelming generosity of mainly warm thermal socks during Advent time brought all together as a faith community.



St. Basil Council



A few years ago, the members wanted to get a banner. They wanted something unique, after inquiring with National office on the rules and regulations, engaged a local artist, Jadzia Romaniec, to work on it in designing and creating a banner. The resultant banner was on full display in the sanctuary during the online Mass for St. Basil Council on Sunday, April 26, 2020, the Third Sunday of Easter as well as on the Feast of Our Lady of Good Council. The Mass was celebrated by Spiritual Advisor Fr. Daryold Winkler and included a special prayer intention for the CWL 100th anniversary.

Reaching Out

Since March, when conventions and meetings were cancelled, one of the desires of members has been to connect with each other. There is also a greater awareness of the effects of physical isolation and the dangers of loneliness; no one needs to feel alone. Many councils are making efforts in this context. Respecting the physical distancing rules, some members had lunch together. Each of them was in their own car in a place where they could park facing each other. With their windows rolled down, they all had a nice chat! Some members have kept in touch through driveway visits. Other members have been doing drive by greetings and birthday wishes.

Electronic means of communications, such as phone, emails, texts, etc., have been the most popular way of staying connected. Many parish council presidents have formed telephone committees or are regularly calling up their members to find out how they are doing. Emailing has become even more important in helping to keep everyone updated on the latest news. In one case, the president has been writing to members who did not have email. We are very fortunate to have so many different means of communications available to us. It is even more striking when you consider what it was like in Jesus' time.



There is also a thirst for spirituality among the members exacerbated because we can no longer be physically present for Eucharistic celebrations. The Lord has not abandoned us though, and there are many other ways to be in His presence. One parish council president, for example, has been enjoying walks while listening to religious hymns. Several parish councils have organized virtual prayers sessions and invited everyone in the diocese to join them (in the virtual sense). This has included the Rosary, the Divine Mercy, 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care (spread over three days), novenas, prayers for priests, as well as other prayers. A prayer group was even formed using Zoom. One parish council also helped to organize live streaming of their parish's Sunday Mass so everyone could watch and participate.

The outreach side of the CWL mission spirit has also emerged in recent activities. A nursing home in the Ottawa area recently suffered 25 deaths so one council began sending lunches to all the staff as a way of helping. Several councils began making masks for frontline workers including masks made specifically for babies and hospitals. One council has

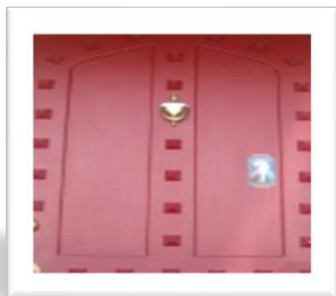
continued making prayer shawls for mothers of new babies and for parishioners in need. They recently delivered three prayer shawls. One parish council resolution chair carried out a letter writing campaign to address the long-term care situation in Ontario. It is only a beginning, but it is a sign that good things are growing.

At the diocesan level, one of the most important things is the need to facilitate communication and sharing between the parishes and their members through emails and conference calls. This point was emphasized after an email was sent at the beginning of May which summarized upcoming events that members might be interested in. The diocesan executive liked it so much they asked that this be done monthly. In pre-Covid times, members might have complained about having too many emails! The advantage of sharing our experiences is more important than ever. We are treading on new ground and nobody has a map. We are completely in God's hands. There is so much we can learn from each other and it is a great opportunity to try new things. As well as keeping the parish presidents informed.

There are three diocesan initiatives. The first is "CWL Wednesday!" which encourages all members in the diocese to wear their CWL pin every Wednesday. It is a conscious way of reminding ourselves that we are not alone and that we are in each other's thoughts and prayers. Knowing this can bring a smile to our faces.



The second initiative is "Reaching Out" which supports and encourages all members to reach out to other members, their families, and their friends. This initiative is consistent with what many of the councils are already doing and it promotes reaching out for all councils and all members.



Seal the Doorposts

The third initiative is "Seal the Doorposts" which consists of placing a picture of the Divine Mercy on one's front door. This initiative did not originate with CWL but was an invitation from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception as a powerful act of faith. In this time of crisis, it seemed appropriate to direct our focus towards the Lord.

With predictions of a second and even a third wave of the current pandemic, nobody really knows what the future holds for us. Will we go back to the old normal, or will we live the rest of our lives with new restrictions? What the Ottawa experience has shown is that even in the darkest situation, there is always potential for growth and this growth starts with the members. At the diocesan executive level, they are like gardeners encouraging plants to grow to their most beautiful potential. During the pandemic, members have opened themselves up to deeper connections with each other, a greater willingness to try new things, and an awareness that lives really do depend on God's love. With the help of the Holy Spirit and the gentle guidance of our Lady of Good Counsel, we will get through this stronger than ever!



BE THAT SOMEONE SISTER

Be that someone sister,
The one of compassion and care.
Be that soul who seeks
The other full of fear.
Go ahead, be radical, wear your heart on your sleeve,
Show that you're not plastic
Or a modern make-believe!
Get out there in Loving
The lonely and forlorn,
It's not far to walk another
From midnight to morn!
Be that someone sister
In a world of greed,
Adjust your lens bifocals
To feel the next in need.
Build up friendships loving
The lesser to the least,
Share your hearts and souls,
Now that's a royal feast!
And in your gentle sharing
Of what is free to give,
You'll teach a fractured sister
The joy of how to live!



Submitted by Jean Anderson, Council President
Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Ottawa Diocese

RESOLUTIONS

The Canadian Armed Forces have given their report to the Ontario Provincial Government on their mission in several long-term care homes. This report brought to light the glaring problems many of the long-term care homes are experiencing and the absolute disregard for dignity and respect for the residents.



Premier Ford has advised that the Canadian Armed Forces will extend their mission until June 12, 2020. We are also advised that the province has taken over the 5 long-term care homes that have been particularly hard hit by COVID-19. The Premier, Doug Ford has ordered public servants to launch an independent commission in July. He stated that he is committed to ensuring the commission will be open, transparent, and independent.

Please keep writing to ask for answers and a public inquiry. We need to continue to advocate for these vulnerable people while there is so much media coverage and public awareness. Let's keep the pressure on for meaningful change.

Remember in February 2019, Education and Health Directive #14 made us aware that personal support workers were given on average 6 minutes to get long term care residents up and ready in that time. A physically able person would be hard pressed to get it all done in that time and it does not even account for residents that have mobility issues, hearing aids, dentures, and incontinence products. There is currently no mandated standard for daily care in the province for the 78,000 (as of Feb 2019) residents living in these homes. This is just one of the many issues that the independent commission must address as well changing long term care homes to one resident per room.

Let your Diocesan Resolution Chair or your Diocesan Council President know if you have sent letters so they will forward the total to me. The number of letters sent will be made known to the provincial government when we visit. Thank you for using your voice to help!

Listed below are the addresses for the ministers and critics that need to hear from us.



Thank you to the members that have written-please encourage other members to write too!

Minister of Health
Hon. Christine Elliott
Unit 22, 16635 Yonge St.
Newmarket, ON
L3X 1V6

Minister of Long-Term Care
Hon. Merilee Fullerton
Suite 100, 240 Michael Cowpland Dr.
Kanata, ON
K2M 1P6

Opposition Critics

Health Critic

Teresa J. Armstrong NDP

155 Clarke Rd.

London, ON

N5W 5C9

Home Care and Long-Term Care Critic

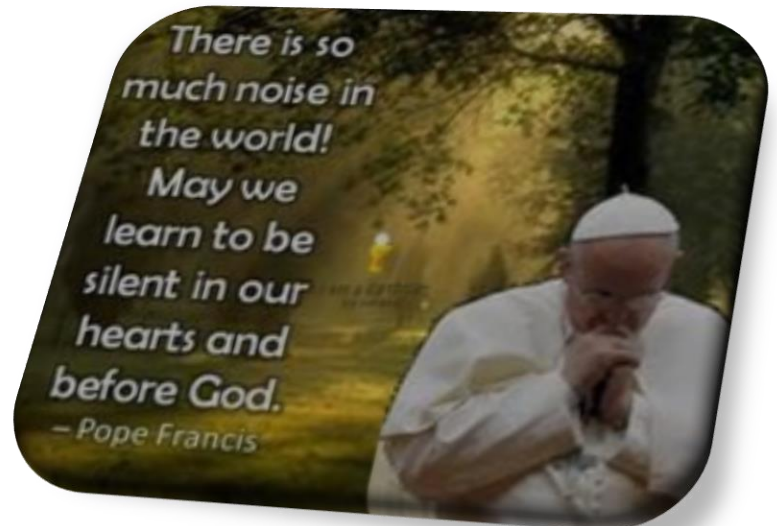
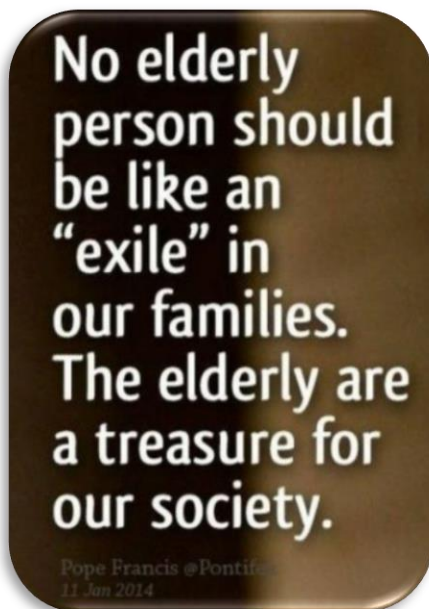
France Gelinis NDP

Hanmer Valley Shopping Centre

Suite 15, 5085 Hwy 69 N

Hanmer, ON P3P 1P7

.....Submitted by Wilma Vanderzwaag, OPC Resolutions



One arm to Heaven



Right now, I am writing from a hospital room. The day's last rays of sunlight are coming from the window and casting a warm light on my mother who is lying in the bed beside where I sit. Ave Maria is playing on my computer which faces me as I try to compose my thoughts which I want to share with you. A few days ago, my mother, June Meady had a massive stroke in the early evening. She was not found until the next day when my brother came home for lunch with her, as was his routine.

According to the neuroscientist, it was the kind of stroke and circumstances which would have killed most people outright. But somehow, she hung on.

Now it is six days later. She survived a subsequent heart arrest situation and was brought back. But she cannot move her left side or speak very clearly. She has a feeding tube in her nose, and an oxygen mask. But that is not what I wanted to share with you, her Sisters whom she held so closely. Words are raspy and seem to strangle partially formed in her mouth. For someone, whose joking motto was "help I've fallen, and I can't stop talking!" this must be the greatest frustration. However, she has turned to her good right hand to reach out and talk with us. Thumbs up. Thumbs down. Miming an oxygen mask so they would replace the nasal version. Tapping her nails on the bed rail when she wants the attention of one her children in the room and indicating where she hurts so that one of us will massage the area until she relaxes again and falls asleep. What she can communicate to the nurses and her family has been remarkable. But it not just immediate need she "tells" us about. It is more. She responds to her grandchildren's notes by rubbing her hand against her heart. She points to her son-in-law and gives him thumbs up for his caring about her daughter. She mimes talking and points to me when she wants to talk about our happy times. I was talking earlier this evening about our tea parties in the back yard, the raspberry bushes we would hide in and the year she grew corn which was taller than all of us kids but never produced a cob. Then she gestured a salute and I realized she was reminding of the days when she was Brown Owl with the 5th Pack of brownies. None of us could afford to go to camp at Polly Lake, so she brought the camp to her backyard. "Brownie camp Mom?" Finger to nose. "Bingo."

Anyone who knows my mother that she was all about "the funny". Whether she was encouraging others to break out of their shell and dance with her, wearing her Viking helmet during a presentation to her sisters, teasing a grumpy priest, or reminding her children to laugh when they got too serious – June was a lifelong optimist and lover of laughter.

Memories. Eighty-eight years of memories. Where do I start? What does she want to talk about? Well, she told me. Her family. Her friends. The funny things which she cherished. The most thumbs up over the last few days have been for those moments of silliness, those absurd observations and unexpected jokes which emerge in the middle of times of great stress. Luckily, we kids and grandkids “don’t fall far from the tree” so we have been supplying them abundance. But that giant heart of June’s has taken a kicking and now she is struggling. But she will not want anyone to remember her in that way, but as the energetic, optimist who never gave up, never lost faith.

What I most wish to share with you is something new she created – a way to let us know when she wants to pray. One arm raised upwards to Heaven, her hand cupped and outstretched as if to receive the graces of God. I thank God for the great blessing of a mother like June. A mother, a sister, a daughter, a friend, a grandmother, great-grandmother, Sister, Life member, mentor, teacher, entertainer, writer, painter animal

rescuer who shared her great whole heart with everyone she met. And I thank God for granting her the time with us to witness her strength, her overflowing love, and her steadfast faith.



June with daughter Lori Pecchia

If you knew June, she would love to know that she has sometime made you smile, or feel better about yourself, or dare to try something you were afraid of. Even now, in her last hours, my mother is reminding me to laugh at the absurdities of life, to be brave and face your fears and to reach out to God and ask for His graces. Thank you, God, for the abundances of graces you have given my mother and her family and circle of friends. Thank you for June Gloria.

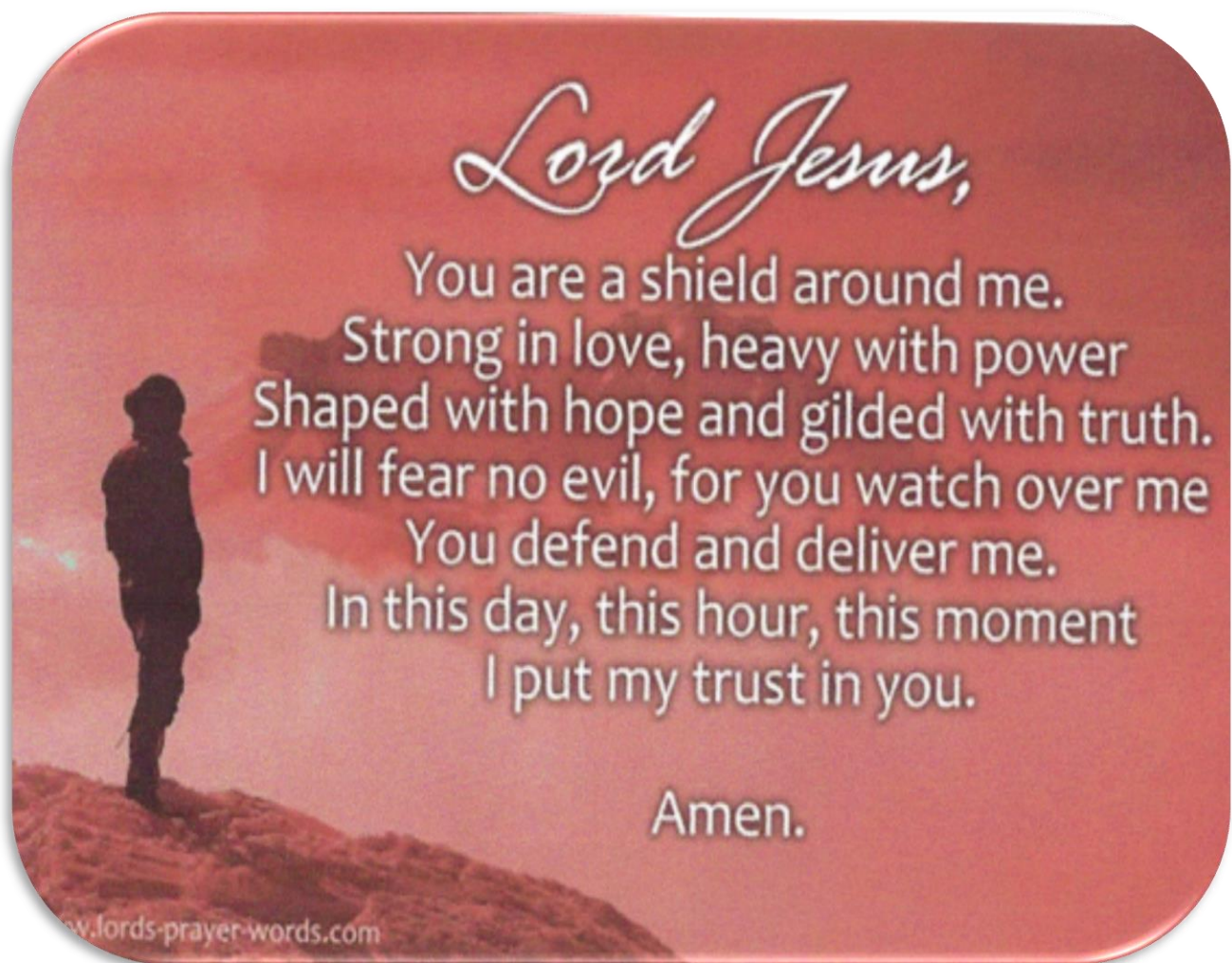
Angela Meady

Footnote:

(June Meady was a convert to Catholicism in 1957 and member of St. Peter's Parish in Thunder Bay. When the Church started its own CWL group, she was the first president. She went on to become a Diocesan President for the Diocese of Thunder Bay and was honored to become a Life Member in 2005. Up until the time of her death on May 1, 2020, June was the CWL Life Member Liaison in Ontario for the Thunder Bay Diocese.



Prayer



.....Submitted by Mary Capobianco, OPC Community Life Chairperson



Food *for* Thought

Our Life all around us has been turned upside down, as we gradually step out, we must adopt the "new normal"as "old habits die hard" it will be difficult to adjust What is.....



ADJUSTING
TO
PANDEMIC
LIFE

finding
your new
normal



- ❖ The end of the lockdown will not spell a return to the old "normal". Wear the mask in public, you are protecting "Others" ...and hopefully others will see, and they will in turn consider doing the same...the world will be a better and safer place.
- ❖ The **new normal** has become "remote everything". Remote sales, remote work, remote customer service, remote supply chain, remote manufacturing, etc....
- ❖ It is a paradigm shift – learn the new way of shopping, with a few clicks you can shop.
- ❖ If you want to be entertained, music, games, movies are at our fingertips.
- ❖ Stay connected communications is equally simplified, with just a conference call over a telephone or computer program.
- ❖ If you can work from home, do so – cut down on travel time, more productivity, gas pollution is cut down, etc.
- ❖ Above all pray and pray more.



for

Thought

Overcoming
loneliness & Stay
mentally fit.



- ❖ A good way to work through, loneliness, burnout and fatigue is through helping others, we have many CWL members across Canada making masks and distributing to neighbours and front-line workers.
- ❖ Focusing on service to others during this time can help lessen the loneliness. Shifting our attention from ourselves to others.
- ❖ Donating money, food or helping neighbours in need by grocery shopping for them or walking their dogs. Your continued outreach of empathy and generosity within your communities will be heartwarming.

Jesus told us we would
experience trials and
difficult times:

*I have told you all this so that you may
have peace in me. Here on earth you will
have many trials and sorrows.*

***But take heart, because I have
overcome the world.***

John 16:33



has tested many of us, but through it all we have seen many teams come together to overcome challenges, reiterate the importance of emotional wellbeing.



First is to connect with someone else, ground ourselves to make sense of our relationship with others, reaching out to people we love. Human connection is necessary, during these times it should be virtual.

Second is to find time for yourself, to do something that energizes and sustain you. Taking care of yourself. It is ok to ask yourself "if you are ok".



Meditation is good, relax...pause... deep listening, without distraction is powerful....
...Peace enables us to do more and be productive.
Use the opportunities taking stock of your life.

Our next online newsletter will be the September issue.



We all look forward to the day when we can connect in more personal ways together. Until then, please continue to stay safe and know that you are making a difference to your families and loved ones, your community, and the world.

