



WELCOME TO THE
ON-LINE NEWSLETTER

We're so glad you're here!

**105TH NATIONAL ANNUAL CONVENTION
TORONTO, ONTARIO
AUGUST 10-13, 2025**

We believe that this convention will be an incredible opportunity to connect, learn, and grow together.

So, let's begin building our excitement now!

For information regarding accommodations, read more here:

<https://cwl.on.ca/important-update-to-2025-national-convention-accommodations-from-colleen-martin/>

For an update regarding the convention program at a glance, check out The Canadian League – Winter 2025 (Pg. 14), read more here:

<https://www.cwl.ca/the-canadian-league-winter-2025/>



Luce and Friends

The Dog - SANTINO - was for San Rocco (the Saint Pilgrim) a sign of Divine Providence that assisted him in times of extreme need.

It symbolizes his fidelity to God's calling. The dog is also a symbol of friendship.



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Lenten Prayer

Heavenly Father, as I begin my Lenten journey, guide me to the path that leads to you. Fill my heart with gratitude, patience, strength, and peace as I strive to become the-best-version-of-myself. Let me hear your voice in the deepest reaches of my heart. Give me rest in you. Help me to accept others, showing them your great love instead of casting judgment. Stay with me through the busy days this week and remind me that when I need comfort, solitude, wisdom, or guidance, I can always turn to you.

Amen. Dynamic Catholic



Follow us to stay updated on CWL events and information:



[Ontario Provincial Facebook Page](#)



[Ontario Provincial Website](#)

Colleen's Message of Joy

My dear sisters, I was recently blessed to share in a spiritual retreat in Sault Ste Marie with ladies from that region. This was a Holy moment as the retreat was scheduled prior to national meetings in Toronto; I had planned to drive so it meant I was able to attend.



This little trip turned into an adventure when I could not locate my passport on Thursday before our planned departure from Thunder Bay the next day. Who knew you cannot make application for a passport in one location and pick it up in another? I didn't. Hence began an adventure with a stop in Sault Ste. Marie, a hair-raising drive through a snowstorm to Barrie, and a third day's drive, on still not great roads, to Kitchener's passport office.

I share all of this with you as it will help demonstrate our Provincial Spiritual Advisor Bishop Dowd's explanation of two kinds of hope. During Bishop Dowd's studies in French, he "learned that the French language has two words for what, in English, we call "hope". These are *espoir* and *espérance*, and while both relate to a sense of expectation, they do not mean quite the same thing." From Bishop Dowd's first pastoral letter for the Jubilee of 2025 available at <https://dioceseofsaultstemarie.org/letter1>.

For my situation, the word *espoir* is what I felt when the lady at the passport office in Thunder Bay told me about several offices in southern Ontario being able to get me a passport in 3 days. There was a possibility I would get a passport but no certainty particularly with the stormy weather forecasted. Bishop Dowd describes, "*Espérance* as different from *espoir*: it doesn't just focus on a possible outcome, but on the anticipation of something far more certain." Once I travelled to Kitchener, went to the passport office and received a piece of paper saying my passport would be available on Thursday for pick up between noon and 4 pm then I felt *espérance*.

Does this second type of more certain hope describe your hope in our Lord? If not, why not? What is holding you back? Take time during Lent to revisit the Scriptures and the Lord's promises to us. As my parish priest likes to say, "our baptism is our ticket to heaven." Through study of Scripture and reflection on questions posed by Bishop Dowd in his pastoral letter make this Lent a Lent to remember by developing *espérance*, confident hope, in the salvation promised by our Lord and live the Joy of the Gospel!!



Pearls of Wisdom

OPC Past President Linda Squarzolo

A council's history is recorded in the minutes of all the meetings that were held over the years. If the council has been in existence for over one hundred years, that is quite a record. There may be boxes of minute books and binders stored in cabinets in some dark storage room. Has anyone ever taken the time to summarize the highlights of these recorded events and published a summary of the council's history?

In recent years several councils of the Catholic Women's League have amalgamated to form new councils, parishes have closed or councils have simply disbanded for a variety of reasons. When this happened the question arose, "What do we do with our archives?" Members were concerned about finding a home for all the minutes that recorded events and activities of their great accomplishments. Unfortunately, in most cases, there was no secure place to house them.

On a brighter note, if the council wished to keep a record of their history, a committee could be established to go through the old minute books and summarize the highlights of each year. These summaries could be compiled into a book of the council's history. This would be a wonderful resource to have on hand and to share with members. If ever the council was not able to continue or had to amalgamate, this history book could be stored in the archives of the level above.

As archivist for the Sault Ste. Marie Diocesan Council, I often wished we had some historical information on councils whose parishes closed many years ago.



Next month, I will offer suggestions about what historical information should be recorded in your history books.

Vice President's Corner

Karen McDonald



As we journey through Lent, we pause to recognize this sacred time not merely as a period of sacrifice, but as a vibrant season filled with joy and anticipation.

Every moment, every practice during these weeks draws us closer to an unfathomable joy that awaits us. Lent invites us to reflect deeply on the themes of obedience and love, challenging us to ask ourselves, ***“What can I do for God today?” and “What sacrifices can I offer that will be pleasing to Him?”***

In the spirit of this reflective journey, the CWL stands out as a beacon of shared faith, embodying the incredible gifts of obedience and love that each member contributes. Together, we have the privilege of living out our faith in service to others, building an enduring sisterhood that uplifts and inspires.

In the latest edition of The Canadian League – Winter 2025, National President Shari Guinta and National Vice-President Betty Colaneri shine a light on the joy that comes from engaging with the League. Shari enthusiastically declares her love for the CWL: *“Oh, I love the League!”*. Her passion resonates in every line, reminding us of the joy in community and shared purpose. Betty opens her heart, providing thought-provoking insights from her CWL journey. She encourages all of us to *“Remember why you joined”*, inviting us to reconnect with the heart of our shared mission. She beautifully reminds us to recount the stories filled with precious moments of sisterhood that bind us together across Canada. Through her words, we are reminded that *“we share ‘I’ faith that unites us in prayer and love”*—after all, who doesn’t appreciate a heartfelt story?

As you read their articles, I encourage you to reflect on your personal CWL journey. ***What moments have brought you joy? How has your involvement enriched your life and the lives of those around you?*** When asked why you belong to the CWL, share your unique story and the powerful experiences that have shaped your faith. Consider extending that invitation to someone in your life—bring ‘I’ person into this nurturing and vibrant community.

Let us remember, as we embark on this Lenten journey, that even our sacrifices can be filled with joy and purpose. In our shared mission, we strive to uplift one another and to ask in unison, “Dear Lord, what can I do for you today?”

Embrace the joy of Lent and the blessings that come from serving in the League, knowing that each act of obedience and love brings us closer to the heart of God.



Explore the inspiring thoughts shared by our sisters and reflect on your own incredible journey with the CWL: The Canadian League – Winter 2025.

Together, let us celebrate our faith, support one another, and look forward to the greater joy that lies ahead.



Treasurer

Lisa Fillingham

In our journey as members of the Catholic Women's League of Canada, we are truly blessed to have access to a wealth of financial supports and resources from both the provincial and national levels. These remarkable offerings empower us to grow, support one another, and strengthen our communities in unique and impactful ways. Let's explore how these resources uplift our mission and foster spiritual development among our members.

The Provincial Development Fund is designed to assist diocesan councils. Funding requests are carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis. A key criterion for consideration is the inclusion of a spiritual development component within the proposed program. All reasonable requests will be thoughtfully reviewed, subject to the availability of funds within the provincial budget.

Application (Appendix A2.6.9-00):

<https://cwl.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/OPC-Manual-of-Policy-and-Procedure-July-2024.pdf>



Let's
Grow
Together

The National Development Fund provides assistance to councils at all levels. Applications may be submitted once per calendar year. It is important to note that councils are expected to explore funding opportunities at intervening levels before applying for a national subsidy

(e.g., a parish council should first approach the diocesan council, then the provincial council, before applying to the national level). Funding requests should be submitted to support initiatives that: **READ CRITERIA HERE...**

The National Bursary Application offers financial assistance to members who require support to pursue various educational opportunities.

To access the above national forms:

<https://www.cwl.ca/forms/>

Form #512 - National Development Fund Package

Form #552 - National Bursary Application



Minute By Minute

OPC Secretary

Lisa Henry



It is no small coincidence that we've named this feature "Minute by Minute." This month, the title especially encapsulates our invitation to live out Lent in small, meaningful ways, just as secretaries meticulously keep track of important moments. As we focus this month on The Joy of Lent, we encourage each member to embrace these practices, taking life Minute by Minute, with intentionality and reflection.

Here are some ways to enrich your Lent experience:

Reflect in Prayer: Start a project recording the minutes of your prayer life. Write down your thoughts, questions, and feelings as you journey through Lent in communion with God.

Journal Your Reflections: Dedicate time daily to journal your reflections, prayers, and the scripture passage that speaks to your heart. Let the act of writing be a dialogue with God, a canvas for your soul.

Record Joy-Filled Moments: Make it a habit to note down joy-filled moments each day. What brings you joy? Where do you see God's hand in your life? These moments, however small, are treasures on your journey.

Remain in Gratitude: Surround yourself with gratitude, acknowledging God's constant presence in your life. Let gratitude infuse your days, shaping your perspective and enhancing your relationship with Him.

An Invitation to Transformation

As we walk through this sacred season of Lent, may we embrace the beauty of the journey, savouring each moment and drawing closer to God. Let this time of reflection and penance inspire us to cultivate a deeper faith, allowing our hearts to be transformed by His love. Together, let us take it Minute by Minute, discovering the profound joy and peace that comes from being fully present with God.

faith

Claudette Langdon



“Lent is a journey that involves our whole life, our entire being. It is a time to reconsider the roads we are taking, to find the way back home, to rediscover the fundamental bond with God, on which everything depends.” Pope Francis



The word ‘Lent’ comes from the old English word *Lencten* which means springtime.

Let us look at Lent as a spring cleaning of our souls.

Ash Wednesday is the gateway to our journey of reflection and prayer. This is a time when we stop and assess how we're doing in our walk with God. Ashes are put on our foreheads as a solemn reminder of human mortality and the need for reconciliation. This marks the beginning of the penitential Lenten season lasting 40 days.

Lent is an intense part of the liturgical year. We are challenged to renew our understanding of this important season of the church, to truly appreciate its gift.

While this time is a period of sacrifice and abstinence, that should not be our sole focus. Lent is where we centre on God and make a more concerted effort to put Him first in our lives. **READ MORE...**



The Joy of Lent

A CBC news article by Alison Northcott, caught my eye recently. She reported on the issue of online sports gambling and how harms to health and well-being from gambling are "more substantial than previously understood".

Ontario legalized online betting in 2022, opening the door to private online gambling companies to operate there. "Sports betting now is so intertwined with sports as a whole, you can't watch an entire game without seeing an ad." (CBC News) **Learn more here...**



Councils wishing to learn more and plan action can look to these resources: **READ MORE...**



As we journey through Lent the **Stations of the Cross** can remind us of our dignity. Station 10 tells us that "And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots." What could be more humiliating than to be stripped of your garments before your own mother and friends and then to be hung upon a cross to die. The stripping of our Lord's garments revealed that the sacredness of His life was not in what He obtained or had as a possession; rather, the sacredness and value of His life was solely about who He was. In our own lives we must strive to see the value of who we are. Too often we fall into the trap of

taking our identity and value in the things of this world. Many can mistakenly think, "The more possessions I have the greater my happiness will be." Just like Jesus, our dignity comes from our union with God.

Councils are invited to read the Pastoral Letter for the Jubilee ("Entering Into Hope") by Provincial Spiritual Advisor Most Rev. Bishop Thomas Dowd. It can be found at <https://dioceseofsaultstemarie.org/letter1>



SOCIAL JUSTICE

Hilarion Mitchell



Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope

In addition to finding hope in God's grace, we are also called to discover hope in the signs of the times that the Lord gives us.

Pope Francis, 'Spes non confundit' Section 7.

March is filled with many signs of hope with the longer daylight, spring blossoms, birds chirping, pollinating bees, greening foliage and grass as we reconnect with Mother Nature and each other. It is also Lent, a season of hope and time of spiritual renewal in preparation for the resurrection of Jesus at Easter.



OPC Social Justice Rosary: Betsy Currier, Life Member, has prepared and will be leading the Social Justice Rosary with the Diocesan Social Justice chairs in recognition of the Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope – on Tuesday March 11 at 7:00 pm. (See poster on page 11)

March 17th marks the 5th anniversary that the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in Ontario. During that period of uncertainty, being hopeful allowed many to be resilient through the various phases, lockdowns, vaccine rollouts, etc. The pandemic seems like another lifetime ago. On this anniversary, hope is still needed as the pandemic has ongoing impact on social justice issues by exposing inequalities affecting individuals as seen in the Social Determinants of Health (SDH). These are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes and are more important than health care or lifestyle choices in influencing health (WHO). **READ MORE...**

League Position Papers

2023 Waste Management: Position Statement: The Catholic Women's League of Canada acknowledges that waste management is a societal issue and that better waste management practices are essential to ensure cleaner air, cleaner water, more sustainable use of natural resources and the recovery and reuse of many waste materials.

2023 Water: Position Statement: The Catholic Women's League of Canada recognizes the interdependence of all members of the human family and the reliance on water for life. Drinking water, including its quality, distribution, privatization and conservation, is significant. The League affirms the urgency to use and protect water resources in a sustainable and controlled way for future generations.

Invites You to walk with us on a 'Virtual' Pilgrimage to Rome

Not going to Rome for the Year of Jubilee?

Mark your calendar for four evenings of spiritual reflections,

March 10 to 13, 2025 at 7:00 pm

Eastern Time (US and Canada)

You can attend one or all evenings

Each evening will be special and part of the Virtual Pilgrimage

Monday, March 10, 2025, is hosted by the OPC Faith Chair

Tuesday, March 11, 2025, is hosted by the OPC Social Justice Chair

Wednesday, March 12, 2025, is hosted by the OPC Service Chair

Thursday, March 13, 2025, is hosted by our Provincial President

PLEASE REGISTER IN ADVANCE FOR THIS MEETING:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/giePIOYIQOKSKakMHmudlg>

**After registering, you will receive a confirmation email
containing information about joining the meeting**

Share Your Prayer!

Continue the Prayer Journey: Share your Council's Heartfelt Words!

In our November newsletter, we introduced "**Share Your Prayer!**", a collaborative initiative from the Ontario Provincial Council, where we built a prayer line by line based on what was on their hearts at that moment. We invited you and your councils to join this beautiful experience and share your collective creations with us. See the November issue here for your reference: <https://cwl.on.ca/november-2024-on-line-newsletter/>

Inspired by this call, **St. Peter the Apostle CWL Council in North Bay** embarked on their own prayer journey. With hearts united in faith, they crafted a prayer that reflects their council's unique spirit and connection with God. We are delighted to share their heartfelt prayer with you!



*Loving Creator,
We come to you this day
With grateful hearts for your love.
We thank you for our many blessings:
For the caring fellowship of our sister CWL members,
For the love and help received from our families and our parish family
For your constant guidance and protection
May we be always open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
Grant us strength to always know and do your will.
We ask for your continued care for those dealing with health issues.
We pray for our children who are suffering in different ways, may they
come to know you better.
Through the intercession of your blessed mother Mary, Queen of Peace,
we pray for peace in our country and in the world.
May your Sacred Heart be praised throughout the whole world. Amen.*

Now, we extend the invitation to your council! We encourage you to embark on this enriching experience as a faith activity and create your own collective prayer with your council members.

How?

1. Start with "DEAR GOD..." (or an alternate salutation) at the top of a piece of lined paper
2. Pass the paper to each member of your council, one by one.
Invite each member to add a single line only, expressing whatever is on their heart. **READ MORE...**

78th ANNUAL PROVINCIAL CONVENTION AND AMM

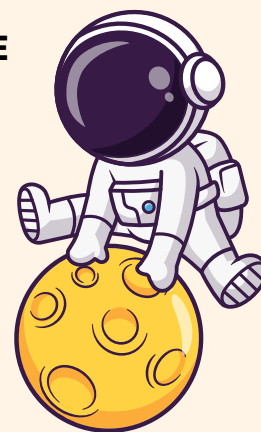
JULY 6 – 9, 2025

FOUR POINTS SHERATON CONFERENCE CENTRE

150 Wellington Road

LONDON, ONTARIO

1-519-681-0600



Dear League sisters:

We are over the moon with your response to this year's provincial convention! So much so, that the only rooms available at the host hotel, Four Points by Sheraton, are beautiful king bed suites. This just goes to show the power and connectedness of our League community. We look forward to sharing a memorable and uplifting experience with you all... and of course, lots of hugs!

The good news is that the convention planning committee has secured a block of 20 double queen suites at the Comfort Inn Suites (1120 Dearness Dr., London, ON) at a rate of \$149 (plus taxes), includes a hot breakfast. It is steps away from the Four Points by Sheraton. You don't even have to cross a street!

You can call the Comfort Inn Suites to book a room by calling their Reservations Department at: 226-785-3484 and quote group name: 'Catholic Women's League'

Check out the Comfort Inn Suites at: <https://www.choicehotels.com/en-ca/ontario/london/comfort-suites-hotels/cn299>

We are pleased to share that Dr. Josephine Lombardi be the guest speaker at the 78th Annual Provincial Convention in London! Dr. Lombardi is an award-winning author, educator, and documentary film maker.

Dr. Lombardi names Mary as a 'synodal way' and 'accompanying witness' to the Spirit's guidance of the synodal process. Marian Approaches to Synodality tells us to listen to her son, to the spirit—essential for discerning topics like formation and the role of women in the Church.

Throughout the convention there will be many opportunities to grow in faith; to deepen our understanding of the work our Catholic Women's League is doing in the province of Ontario; and to renew and make new friendships amongst our sisters in attendance during these inspiring days.

Events Coming Your Way!

Environmental Days:

One of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching is the Care for God's Creation, Stewardship of Creation and responsibility for social justice.

March 5 to April 17: During Lent, rethink harmful ways of living with creation and commit to healing our relationships with our Creator and each other (Laudato Si' Movement).



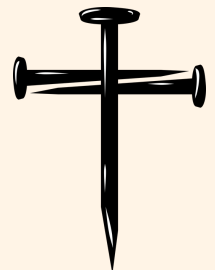
- March 22: World Water Day
- March 22: Earth Hour "Biggest Hour for Earth" 8:30 – 9:30 pm



Stations of the Cross for those with Mental Illness (Family & Friends)

Time: Mar 7, 2025 03:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Every week on Fri, until Apr 18, 2025, 7 occurrence(s)

Timothy Duff, an American Board-Certified Chaplain (Ret.) and Guardian/ Co-Founder of the Guild of St. Benedict Joseph Labre is offering throughout Lent via Zoom weekly online "Stations of the Cross for those with Mental Illness". Below is the information to join in the sessions:



<https://app.zoom.us/jc>

When prompted, enter: Meeting ID: 853 9548 6129

Then enter: Passcode: 504108

Horizons of Hope – Toolkit on Palliative Care

May 6, 7, 13 & 14, 2025

Presented by:

- Dr. Moira McQueen
 - Sr. Mary Rowell
 - Shirley Christo, Life Member
- Stay tuned for full details coming in the April Issue!*



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