



WELCOME TO THE  
**ON-LINE NEWSLETTER**

*We're so glad you're here!*

**Sharing Ideas  
Inspiring Growth.  
Strengthening Our Sisterhood**

We are excited to introduce a brand-new feature in our monthly newsletter: "***Beyond the Bake Sale***" – a space dedicated to highlighting the creative, meaningful, and effective ways CWL councils across Ontario are growing their membership and building vibrant communities.



From simple phone calls that spark connection to innovative tools that streamline participation, each story is filled with inspiration and practical ideas that can be adapted in your own council. To start things off, St. Julia Council in St. Catharines shares how they have doubled their membership in two years!

**[See Page 11!](#)**

**Let's learn from one another and grow together!**

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## **We have a YouTube Account!** **YouTube**

We're excited to announce the launch of the Ontario Provincial Council's very own YouTube channel! We envision this space as a hub for sharing updates, insights, and inspiration from across our organization. While it's brand new and still a bit bare, we encourage you to hop on over and subscribe. We'll be adding more content soon, and we don't want you to miss out as our channel grows! Stay tuned for more updates and exciting content to come. ***Click on any of the images below to watch a video!***



**Follow us to stay updated on CWL events and information:**



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# Colleen's Message of Joy

My dear sisters, the wise newsletter editors chose the dignity of all life as a theme for this month's newsletter.



As members of the League, two of our objects are focused on this Catholic teaching; to protect the sanctity of human life and to recognize the human dignity of all people everywhere.

Take a minute to think about today's world, watch the news, look around your neighborhood and community. At any moment, there is so much in the world contrary to this teaching. For example, unhoused peoples, unborn babies and living humans being taken from the world at the hands of doctors who should be healing; countries ejecting legal immigrants to great danger and separating parents from children, fathers from families; lives lost to war and other activities at the hands or command of individuals simply seeking increased power and wealth; and more.

If we stopped there, we would have feelings of hopelessness that would overwhelm and drive us to despair. Instead, our faith teaches us to take up our cross, to believe in God's salvation plan, and to do all we do for His glory; this belief is what brings us hope and joy amid despair.

So, my dear sisters, do not be afraid. Continue to step forward in love and action as the Spirit moves you. Together, we are the voice of Catholic women expressing their values and promoting dignity and justice for all.

**DON'T  
BE  
AFRAID**

**P.S.** See you next month at convention; in person (the best experience) or virtually ... watch for connection details.  
Hugs, Colleen



# Pearls of Wisdom

OPC Past President

Linda Squarzolo

What a whirlwind the last few weeks have been for us Catholics!

When I awoke early Easter Monday morning, it was shocking to read in the news that our beloved Pope Francis had died. Throughout his papacy, his messages appealed to me: world peace, dignity for migrants and care for the environment. He brought out the best in me and pushed me to wanting to "Make a Difference".

Following his funeral, the cardinals gathered in conclave to select his successor. Everyone waited to see who would be chosen. Cardinal Robert Prevost was elected and he adopted the name Pope Leo XIV. Since then, I have been following news stories about the new pope and researching why he chose the name "Leo".

The previous pope, with the name Leo, was Pope Leo XIII who was the head of the Church from 1878 to 1903, a period of great social change. He was known for writing the Prayer to St. Michael, his eleven encyclicals on the Rosary and his promotion of Catholic social teaching.

**Justice**

**LABOR RIGHTS**



In his document "Rerum Novarum" in 1891, he promoted the dignity of the human person, the right of workers to earn a living wage, the right to form unions and that workers provide decent and honourable labour to their employers. Social justice is one of the pillars of the Catholic Women's League.

One of the things that impressed me about Pope Leo XIV was **[READ MORE HERE...](#)**





# Minute By Minute

OPC Secretary  
Lisa Henry



*A Diocesan Secretary's Journey of  
Growth, Service, and Dignity*

*Submitted by Michelle Morrow, Kingston Diocesan Secretary*

When I joined the Catholic Women's League in Almonte, I knew very little about it—just what the letters stood for. Like many women, I came in with a willingness to serve but with no idea of where God might lead me.

Two years in, I received a phone call from the member overseeing elections inviting me to let my name stand for president. I hesitated. I hadn't learned enough... wasn't ready... wasn't qualified... But she simply asked me, "Can you run a meeting?" I knew I could. And in that moment, something shifted. I felt God's gentle nudge—and I said "yes". **READ ABOUT MICHELLE'S PERSONAL CWL JOURNEY HERE...**

✦ **Why Say Yes to Secretary?** The Secretary role may seem behind the scenes, but it is deeply rooted in dignity. We ensure that the voices of all members are recorded and respected. We preserve the heart of the League through our documentation. Every woman's contribution matters—and as Secretary, we make sure it is remembered.

When I began, I was unsure. But every role since has built my confidence. I've learned I am not alone—I am surrounded by strong, faithful women who support one another.



💬 **Final Thoughts:** To any woman wondering if she's ready: You don't have to have all the answers. You just have to be willing to say "yes" and trust that God—and your CWL sisters—will guide you the rest of the way.

The Secretary role isn't just about minutes. It's about memory, mission, and the dignity of all persons. **Minute by Minute**, we serve... and grow.

## Faith and Dignity of all Persons

*'If we are to share our lives with others and generously give of ourselves, we also have to realize that every person is worthy of our giving. God created that person in his image, and he or she reflects something of God's glory. Every human being is the object of God's infinite tenderness, and he himself is present in their lives.'*

Pope Francis: Evangelii Gaudium - The Joy of the Gospel

The connection between faith and the dignity of all persons is a powerful one, with religious principles often serving as a foundation for promoting human rights, ethical behaviour, and a more just and compassionate world.

The principle of human dignity is the foundation of all the Catholic social teaching principles. **READ MORE HERE...**

Pope Leo XIV, at his first Mass at the Vatican stated, "A lack of faith is often tragically accompanied by the loss of meaning in life, the neglect of mercy, appalling violations of human dignity, the crisis of the family and so many other wounds that afflict our society."

Human dignity supports psychological well-being. Feeling valued and respected is essential for a person's mental and emotional health. It encourages peace and cooperation, it protects fundamental human rights and provides the moral basis for ensuring that people are not subjected to degrading treatment, discrimination, or oppression.

As women of deep faith, we have a moral obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and that we acknowledge their humanity through mutual respect, empathy, and understanding.

In this Jubilee of Hope, let us pray for the grace of spiritual renewal and transformation. May those most in need of being recognized as beloved human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, receive the respect and regard they deserve.

Interested in more information on faith and the Dignity of all Persons, **READ MORE HERE...**



**FAITH**



## **Life and Dignity of the Human Person Prayer**

God of all life,

Help us to appreciate the great gift that is human life  
formed in your image, a reflection of your holiness.

Help us to recognize you  
in all whom you have created:

children not yet born,  
families affected by poverty and war,  
people of different abilities,  
people from other lands, and  
all who are victims of hatred and racism.

Help us to bear witness to the dignity of all whom you  
have created,

regardless of stage of life, or wealth, or ability,  
or color, or creed,

for every person is fully equal in your loving eyes.

Share with us your holy knowledge  
that we are all your children,  
each bestowed with inherent dignity.

May your justice reign forever!

Amen.



# service

Sue Lubowitz

*"There is no single step that can eliminate the pain felt by residential school survivors, but by listening, seeking relationships, and working collaboratively where we are able, we hope to learn how to walk together in a new path of hope."* Bishop William McGrattan

Almost twenty years after the adoption of the the **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, progress has been made in formally recognizing Indigenous peoples, but they continue to face discrimination, marginalization and major challenges in enjoying their basic rights.

The Declaration, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007, established a universal framework of minimum survival standards for the dignity and well-being of the world's Indigenous peoples. It is the most comprehensive international instrument on Indigenous peoples' collective rights, including the rights to self-determination, traditional lands and culture.



Upholding the rights of Indigenous peoples is not merely a legal obligation but a moral responsibility deeply rooted in Catholic teachings and global human rights frameworks.

Catholic social teaching says that the life and dignity of Indigenous peoples should always be protected in the same way that the life and dignity of every human being should be protected.

Canada is home to a large and diverse Indigenous population. The Bishops in Canada share a profound commitment to renewing and strengthening relationships with Indigenous Peoples across Canada with whom the Catholic Church has maintained relations since the 17th century.

The Canadian Catholic Indigenous Council is the key element to this commitment. Consisting of Bishops and Indigenous Catholics, the Council furthers relationships, healing, and joint initiatives with Indigenous Peoples across Canada.



**[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION FUND AND SPECIAL DAYS OF OBSERVANCE HERE ...](#)**



# SOCIAL JUSTICE

Hilarion Mitchell



*Through our witness, may hope spread to all those who anxiously seek it. May the way we live our lives say to them in so many words: "Hope in the Lord! Hold firm, take heart and hope in the Lord!" (Ps 27:14).*

Pope Francis, 'Spes non confundit', Section 25

**Dignity of the human person** is one of the Catholic Social Teachings. "A just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the transcendent dignity of the human person." Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, No. 132

**Organizations Promoting Human Dignity:** Social justice issues such as poverty, homelessness, violence, abuse, systemic racism, intergenerational trauma, etc., prevent individuals from reaching their full potential. Addressing the root causes creates a more just society so that everyone has their basic rights to thrive. Supporting organizations below and others will help them achieve their mandate to assist those in need.

- Aid to Church in Need (ACN) support the persecuted and oppressed.
- Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) work with the poor in the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India and Eastern Europe.
- Canadian Food for Children (CFFC) work to relieve the suffering of the poor in developing countries worldwide.
- Development and Peace-Caritas Canada support partners in the Global South on unjust social, political and economic structures.
- IWIN (I'm Worth It Now) work with human trafficking survivors and investigators.
- Society of Saint Vincent de Paul provides shelter, financial assistance and related programs to address poverty
- Diocesan Charities and Social Services: Support League voluntary funds and organizations (shelters, food banks, family services, etc.).

**READ MORE HERE** to learn about League Resolutions.



# Joy!

*Rejoice in the Lord*  
Philippians 4:4

## JOYFULLY CALLING ALL OUR SISTERS!

2025 Provincial Convention News

Nelly Kelders - 2025 OPC Convention Secretary

### **Counting the Sleeps Until London! Registration Deadline Extended to June 7, 2025!**

Your Invitation to Faith, Fellowship, and Fun at the 2025 OPC Provincial Convention Hello again, sisters! It's getting real—I'm officially counting the sleeps until we're together again this July in London for the Ontario Provincial Council Convention and Meeting of Members! What an incredible joy it will be to welcome all of you faith-filled, service-driven, justice-seeking women to the Diocese of London. Can you feel the excitement building?

In last month's update, I shared a glimpse of our Tuesday program featuring Dr. Josephine Lombardi—a day that promises reflection, inspiration, and spiritual depth. And let's not forget the Gala Dinner Tuesday evening, always a highlight filled with laughter, fellowship, and a little sparkle!

On Wednesday, our final day, the rhythm shifts. We'll start with the business of the League, hearing from President Colleen Martin, Spiritual Advisor Bishop Thomas Dowd, Treasurer Lisa Fillingham, and Social Justice Chair Hilarion Michell, who will present resolutions that shape our path forward.

Before we say goodbye, we'll receive a warm invitation from our sisters in Thunder Bay Diocese, hosts of the 2026 Provincial Convention—and then, we'll head together to St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica to close with the celebration of the Eucharist in the heart of downtown London. What a beautiful way to conclude our time together!

#### ✦ **Travel Tips from a Sister Who's Been There:**

What should I pack?

Comfort is key! Dress in whatever makes you feel like you. Convention spaces can be chilly, so layer up if you're the type who reaches for a sweater in July (I sure do!). The Gala Dinner is our dressiest event, while Games Night is your chance to unwind and have some casual fun.

#### 💰 **Do I need to bring money?**

Yes, and here's why: our vendor marketplace is always full of treasures! Some vendors accept credit, but others prefer cash. Bring a little extra for the raffles, Share the Wealth, and charity collections. Your generosity helps fuel our mission.

On behalf of the London Diocesan Convention Planning Committee, I wish you safe travels as you journey to beautiful southwestern Ontario and the Forest City of London.

**We can't wait to welcome you with open arms, warm hearts, and a spirit ready to celebrate! See you soon, sisters! ❤️**

**To access the registration package on the OPC website,  
click here at [cwl.on.ca](http://cwl.on.ca)**

# Beyond the Bake Sale:

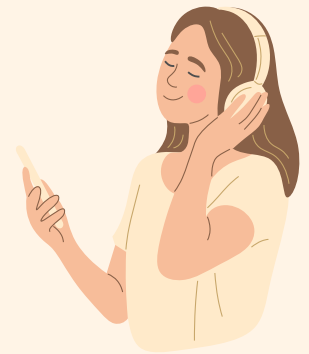
## Fresh recipes for Council Fun and Growth



### ♥ Celebrating Community, Communication & Connection

When it comes to fostering connection, growth, and innovation, the Catholic Women's League at **St. Julia Parish in St. Catharines** is a shining example of how to do it all—with grace, efficiency, and heart.

Under the vibrant leadership of President Mary Joel Modolo, the council has seen a renewed energy in its membership and outreach. Mary Joel's first act as president wasn't to plan an event or chair a meeting—it was to personally call every member. She introduced herself and asked one key question:



“What would you like to see at our gatherings?”

That one call turned into a movement of inclusion. It signaled to each woman that she matters, her voice is heard, and her presence is deeply valued.

### 🗣️ Communication, Connection & Respect

At St. Julia, communication is everything. The executive team works hard to keep all members informed of every event and opportunity—ensuring that no one is left out or left behind. This dedication to inclusiveness reflects their unwavering respect for every woman who attends.



# Beyond the Bake Sale continued

Their monthly meetings are efficient, structured, and above all—fun! Staying on track doesn't mean cutting out the joy; rather, it allows for meaningful time together that's well spent and well appreciated. It's clear: members don't just attend—they look forward to attending.



## **Collaboration with their Spiritual Advisor**

In keeping with the League's mission of spiritual growth, Mary Jo schedules a monthly meeting with their Spiritual Advisor to share plans, discuss ideas, and build a strong pastoral partnership. These conversations ensure their spiritual advisor is engaged in all aspects of council life and feels part of the team—a beautiful expression of unity within the parish.



## **Innovation That Serves**

And here's something you don't hear every day: they have a Square Reader! That's right—St. Julia CWL is embracing technology by accepting contactless payments and chip & PIN cards for memberships, events, and fundraisers. It's simple, it's efficient, and it removes a common barrier to participation.



## **More Than a Council—A Community**

What sets St. Julia apart is their focus on the dignity of all persons. They don't just build programs—they build relationships. Whether it's through a warm phone call, a respectful meeting, a quick tap of a card, or a friendly hello at the parish, every member is seen, heard, and celebrated.

Well done, St. Julia CWL!



You're not just growing membership—you're growing belonging. A true reflection of what it means to go **Beyond the Bake Sale**.





# A Musical Interlude

## My Favourite Things (CWL Edition)



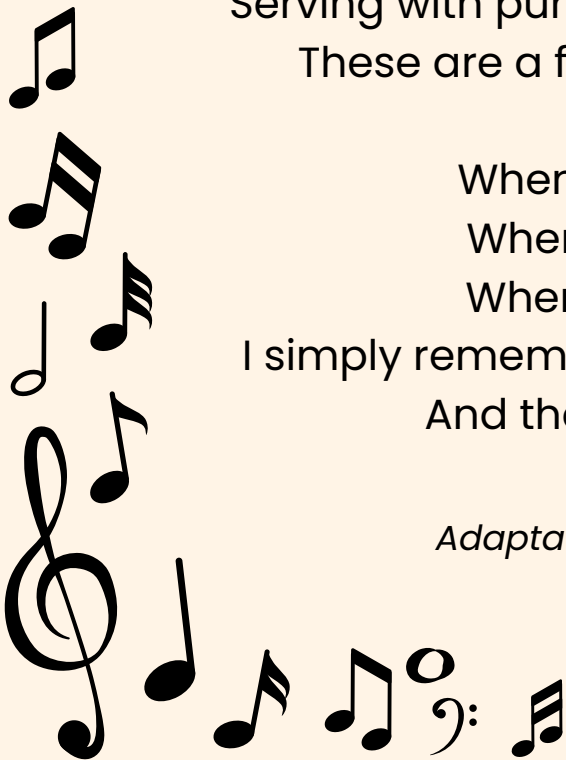
Rosaries shining and candles all glowing,  
Prayer circles forming with wisdom all-knowing,,  
Outreach and bake sales and ladies that sing,  
These are a few of my favourite things.

Feeding the hungry and clothing the cold,  
Listening to stories our members have told,  
Marching for justice with blue and gold wings,  
These are a few of my favourite things.

Gathering yearly for friendship and laughter,  
Lifting up voices in hymn ever after,  
Serving with purpose the joy that faith brings,  
These are a few of my favourite things.

When the doubt strikes,  
When the world stings,  
When I'm feeling small  
I simply remember my sisters in the League,  
And then I don't feel alone.

*Adaptation by Alice Warford, sung by the Scarborough  
Regional Choir at Toronto Diocesan Convention*



## *Luce and Friends*

Luce's pilgrim friends—Fe, Xin, and Sky—embark on the symbolic pilgrimage of hope through the Holy Year with the Jubilee 2025 mascot, designed to embrace and represent all cultures of the world. Each of them wears a brightly colored raincoat, reflecting the kawaii style desired by the artist, but perhaps also carrying symbolic meaning.

**Sky** wears blue, the quintessential Marian color, perhaps embodying the harmony that unites pilgrims in their shared journey. Their face reflects African heritage, and they carry a guitar.



**REGISTRATION  
IS NOW OPEN!**

**105TH ANNUAL NATIONAL  
CONVENTION OF THE CATHOLIC  
WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA**

**AUGUST 10-13, 2025**  
Marriott Downtown at CF  
Toronto Eaton Centre

Please complete form online  
to secure your spot.

<https://cwl.amsoftlive.com/Apps/Pages/ams-event-details/4981?isPreview=False/>

**WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE  
YOU THERE!**

Register Here: [105th Annual National Convention Registration](https://cwl.amsoftlive.com/Apps/Pages/ams-event-details/4981?isPreview=False/)