



WELCOME TO THE

ON-LINE NEWSLETTER

We're so glad you're here!

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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 to watch a video!***

Colleen's Message of Joy

My dear sisters ... recently Holy Spirit has sent several nudges reminding me that God is always with us. It is most important to remember this during the difficult times when we are tempted to cry out, *"My God, my God! Why have you abandoned me!"*



As I write I thought I would look at today's gospel reading for inspiration. Luke 8.14 deserves revisiting as it ends with *"But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance."*

It is the devil who taunts us in times of trouble to not practice patient endurance but to lash out at the Lord for abandoning us. The theme of this month's newsletter is gratitude. Gratitude reminds us every day that God is good in so many ways. Gratitude reminds us to have patient endurance in times of trouble. Take a listen to Father Mike Schmidt connecting gratitude to the Eucharist ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnS7-ZjPfmQ&t=1s>

In my last message, I said Bishop Campeau would have an intro article in the October newsletter. Then a week or so ago, the newsletter team asked if it was coming. My brain failed to put together that if Bishop Campeau is in Rome for September, then how would he meet a mid-September deadline. So, once again my apologies. Let's be hopeful Bishop Campeau's schedule will allow him to contribute something mid-October for the November newsletter.

Please pray for the Ontario Provincial Council who meet virtually for its fall meeting Oct 2-4. It will be exciting to explore the new national theme together and decide on priorities for the 2026 calendar year. If there is a webinar topic you would like to see, please let us know through the CWL website contact us page (www.cwl.on.ca).

May Our Lady of Good Counsel intercede with her Son for safe travel for those visiting family and friends for the Thanksgiving holiday. Be present, be grateful, be joy-filled, and be inspired by all of God's blessings ... until next month ...

Vice-Presidents Corner

OPC Vice-President

Karen McDonald

Appreciating our Mentors ...

As members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, we pray to our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. Mary, the Mother of God, is our greatest mentor ... a humble servant who said yes when called by God to be the Mother of Jesus Christ. Mother Mary had a mentor and her name was Elizabeth.

As I pondered what to write in this newsletter, I thought about the women that I encountered at the 2025 provincial and national conventions. I recalled the smiles, hugs, laughter, and stories that we shared. Many of these women are my mentors who have guided and supported me throughout my 35-year CWL journey. Wise women who are genuine and humble in their service to the League.



We all need mentoring, and we should all be mentors. I am grateful and consider myself blessed to have many wonderful mentors. My mother and grandmother were lifelong League members and my mentors. Two of my late mother's closest friends who call me regularly to catch up on League news, are my mentors.

I remember reading this quotation in a statement from Bishop Thomas Dowd following the death of Pope Francis:

"During our gatherings with Pope Francis, he shared with us the secret to understanding his papacy, which can be summarized as "invite people to holiness, but first meet them where they are at".

<https://dioceseofsaultstemarie.org/news/statement-from-bishop-thomas-dowd-following-the-death-of-pope-francis>

The last phrase, about meeting people where they are at, could apply to membership and mentoring. We meet women in our parishes where they are at in their lives. We promote the CWL, extend an invitation to join our sisterhood, and then we wait. When the timing is right, women will join. At that point, we become the mentors.



Are you a mentor? You likely are and may not know it. I encourage members to take time to think of the women (and spiritual advisors) who are, and have been, your mentors. It is a worthwhile exercise ... I hope it puts a smile on your face as it did mine when I wrote out the names of my mentors whom I am thankful for.

*Be sure to thank your mentors when you can ...
they are important in our lives!*



Want to get the most out of your membership in The Catholic Women's League of Canada? --plan to attend a provincial or national convention.

There is nothing like it! Being with so many like minded and faith filled women from across the province or country is such a boost to your faith journey. You will make new friends, learn about compelling social justice issues, hear wonderful guest speakers and attend daily Masses. It is so moving to hear all the ladies singing the hymns. You will witness the final stages of the process for resolutions. There is also opportunity to have fun with your fellow members in the League.



Start to plan now to attend the Ontario Provincial Convention in **Thunder Bay, July 5-8, 2026** and the National Convention in **Halifax August 9-12, 2026**. You won't be disappointed—see you there!

Submitted by Wilma Vanderzwaag
OPC Administrative Assistant 4



Pearls of Wisdom

OPC Past President

Linda Squarzolo

What an amazing year we Catholics have experienced!

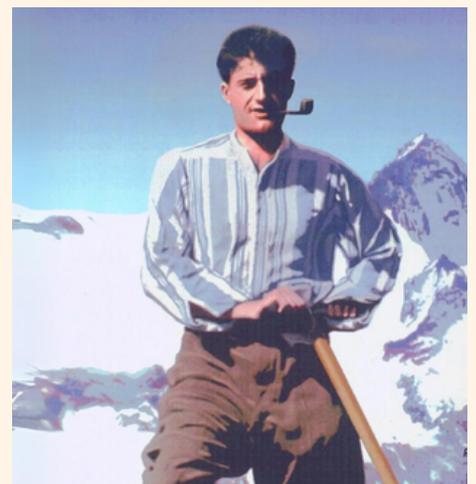
The year 2025 was declared a Jubilee Year by Pope Francis. All Catholics were called to be signs of hope in our families, to our neighbours and everyone we encounter. Many used this special year as an opportunity to take pilgrimages to cathedrals and national shrines in our country or on a pilgrimage to Rome. The Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica opened on December 24, 2024 and will close on January 6, 2026.

On April 21, 2025 the world mourned the passing of our beloved Pope Francis. Although he had been ill in hospital for a lengthy period of time, his health had shown signs of improvement and he had returned home. He will always hold a special place in the hearts of many.

On May 8, 2025 Cardinal Robert Prevost was chosen by the Conclave as the new leader of the Catholic faith. He chose the name Pope Leo XIV. Catholics throughout the world look with hope and anticipation to the future during his papacy.

On September 7th Pope Leo XIV canonized two devout young men to sainthood, St Carlo Acutis and St. Pier Giorgio Frassati.

St. Pier Giorgio Frassati was a young Italian lay Dominican who died of polio at the age of 24 in 1925.



St. Carlo Acutis was born in London to Italian parents.

READ MORE ABOUT OUR NEWEST SAINTS HERE....

During the final months of this Jubilee Year, I urge you to be "hope" in your League activities in faith, service and social justice.



Minute By Minute

OPC Secretary
Lisa Henry



Harvesting Gratitude in the CWL

As October brings crisp air, colourful leaves, and the spirit of Thanksgiving, we are reminded to pause and give thanks for the blessings that shape our lives. For CWL members, gratitude is more than seasonal—it's a daily practice. Each meeting, outreach, and conversation is a chance to live St. Paul's call: *"In all circumstances give thanks"* (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

In the secretary/communications role, gratitude comes alive through simple acts—minutes that preserve our story, newsletters that keep us connected, and announcements that strengthen community. These small tasks reflect thanksgiving: for the women who gather, the councils that keep moving forward, and the Holy Spirit who guides us.

This season also invites us to notice the creative ways councils are serving today. Across the province, members are finding ways to go **"Beyond the Bake Sale,"** finding fresh ways to fundraise, gather in prayer, and serve their parishes. These efforts are gratitude in action—new ideas, courageous steps, and a joyful "thank you, Lord."

How is your council growing?

How are you trying new things?

Where are blessings multiplying in unexpected ways?

Your stories are seeds of gratitude. By sharing them, you not only give thanks for what God has done, but you also plant inspiration in a sister council ready to try something new.



This October, let us thank God for each other, for the gift of the CWL, and for the Spirit leading us into grace-filled possibilities. Together, let's keep gratitude in motion—one story, one idea, one prayer at a time.

Call to Action: Share Your Story!

Send your **"Beyond the Bake Sale"** stories to the OPC Secretary at opcsecretary24@gmail.com

Let's celebrate and give thanks for the creative ways God is working through the CWL!

Fund Raiser for Provincial Convention – July 5–8, 2026

Thunder Bay, ON

Shopping Cart Coins – (dollar size and quarter size) Great stocking stuffer!

Cost per unit is \$10.00

Shipping: Orders 1 – 4 shipping cost – 2.00 per unit

Orders 5 – 10 shipping cost – \$1.50 per unit

Orders 10+ shipping cost will be factored according to cost of the shipping envelope

(We encourage multiple orders to reduce cost of shipping)

E – Transfer available: Use: tbaycwl@gmail.com

To order email: krupap@tbaytel.net



Hotel Registration for the OPC 78th Annual Provincial Convention

Contact **Valhalla Inn**

CALL IN: (807) 577-1121, (807) 964-1121

EMAIL: reservations@valhallahotel.ca

To ensure receiving the special group rate, attendees must identify the group name and/or group code when making the reservations.

All individual reservations must be guaranteed with a credit card.

Please quote the Group Booking Number below:

Ontario CWL 2026 Convention (CI) – 1371903

106th Annual National Convention Fundraiser Halifax, Nova Scotia



Wear a daily symbol of thankfulness with this elegant Blessing and Gratitude Bracelet. Each bead serves as a gentle reminder to pause, reflect and acknowledge five blessings in your life—deepening your awareness of God's presence every day.

Buy one or more for yourself or as a meaningful gift. It comes packaged in a delicate gauze bag, and a heartfelt message:

"This is a Blessing and Gratitude Bracelet.

Whenever you wear it, acknowledge a blessing or something for which you are grateful.

God is present and active in our lives daily. We forget to thank Him for all we have and all we are.

Each bead gives you an opportunity to silently find five things, situations or people you are grateful for.

This gratefulness will help to grow awareness of God's presence in your day."

Price: \$10.00 per bracelet (+ postage or shipping)

Order yours today by emailing natnlcwlconv2026@gmail.com

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. Psalm 107:1

In his inauguration homily, Pope Leo XIII reflected on the Lord's promises and the joy of shepherding the Church: "This sentiment echoes the spirit of Thanksgiving—recognizing grace, expressing gratitude, and continuing in service and humility."

Thanksgiving is an expression of gratitude for God's abundant gifts. We give thanks to the Lord for all our blessings and life; He is most deserving of our thanks.

Living out faith and thanksgiving daily does not require dramatic gestures—it is using ordinary moments throughout your day to reflect on gratitude and thanks.

Most of us begin our day in prayer; thanking our God for all our blessings. This act of faith acknowledges our blessings with gratitude, strengthens our faith in God's love and grace. During the day we may break out in spontaneous prayer for God's gratitude. Before bed we reflect on our day's ending in thanksgiving and renewal of our faith for the next day.

The Eucharist, what we often call Mass, means thanksgiving. It is a spiritual celebration and a continuous sacrifice of thanksgiving for God's countless gifts, including creation and salvation through Christ.

The Introductory Rites prepare us spiritually for the celebration. The Gloria, when sung on Sundays and solemnities, is a radiant hymn of praise as an expression of glory and thanksgiving to God. **READ MORE ON THE**

PARTS OF THE MASS...

Our faith and thanksgiving are spiritual companions. Faith awaits God's future grace. Thanksgiving celebrates His past grace.

Let us stay grounded in praying for God's grace and joy. We are forever thankful for His never-ending love.

May your heart overflow with gratitude for the countless gifts God has bestowed upon you and family.

I wish you all a blessed and joyful Thanksgiving!





THANKSGIVING PRAYER

Father in Heaven, Creator of all and source of all goodness and love, please look kindly upon us and receive our heartfelt gratitude in this time of giving thanks.

Thank you for all the graces and blessings you have bestowed upon us, spiritual and temporal: our faith and religious heritage. Our food and shelter, our health, the love we have for one another, our family and friends.

Dear Father, in Your infinite generosity, please grant us continued graces and blessings throughout the coming year.

This we ask in the Name of Jesus, Your Son and our Brother.

Amen

Thanksgiving as Service

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

I don't usually wear a lot of jewelry. I wear the same earrings almost everyday, my wedding ring and a cross on a chain. I don't even wear a wristwatch anymore. The "blessing and gratitude" bracelet at this past national convention caught my eye and I surprised myself by purchasing it. It's a fundraiser item for the 2026 national convention in Halifax **(to order: see page 7)**. The attached note reminds the wearer to acknowledge a blessing or something for which you are grateful and increase your awareness of God's presence in your day. The concept of gratefulness becomes even more prominent with the Thanksgiving holiday but we are also reminded of local food drives for those who go hungry.

Food insecurity is something we hear about a lot about these days. It is a term that covers a few different experiences. In Canada, those who are marginally food insecure may have a limited selection of food. Those who are moderately food insecure likely make purchases that compromise the quality or quantity of food. Severe food insecurity means people are missing meals, reducing food intake, or even going days without food. Unfortunately, across our country there are more people experiencing each of these levels of food insecurity.



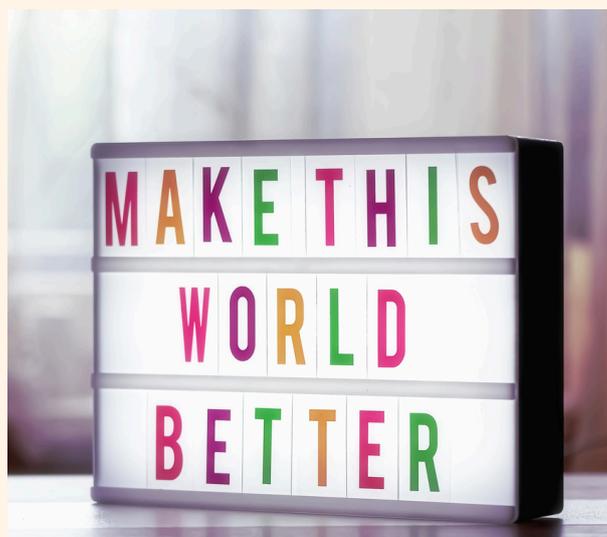
In 2022, one in 10 Canadians was living in poverty. I suspect that may be even higher today. However, it isn't just people living in poverty that are food insecure. In 2022, 15 percent of people who were living above the poverty line experienced moderate or severe food insecurity. That means people who aren't considered poor are buying lower quality food, skipping meals, or reducing their food intake because they can't afford it.

October 16 is **World Food Day**. This year's theme, **Nourishing Hope in Times of Scarcity**, encourages us to respond with compassion and action. Visit the Canadian Food Grains [World Food Day website](#) to access worship and learning resources.

As Service Chairs continue to help alleviate this problem by:

- Revisiting Resolution 2022.01 Enact Federal Legislation to Reduce Food Loss and Waste and work the action plan.
- Researching poverty issues that affect our community (concerning children, youth at risk, the elderly, single parents, and people with disabilities).
- Learning about food waste at home, at school, at hospital, and work places, locally and globally.
- Learning about food sovereignty, growing food locally, and consuming local food.

Let's remember that thankfulness isn't just looking forward to Thanksgiving dinner –it's a way of life! So, as we celebrate, let's carry that thankful spirit with us, shining a light on God's goodness and the wonderful things He's done in our lives. Let's continue to share our blessings, uplift one another, and embrace the joy that comes from a heart full of thanks and gratitude throughout the year!



Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Hilarion Mitchell

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,"

Matthew 25:35

Thanksgiving and Social Justice

Thanksgiving is a time when gratitude abounds for the many blessings bestowed upon us. Yet, when viewed through a social justice lens, it also highlights who is missing both literally and figuratively from our tables. Their absence is a stark reminder that gratitude must also lead to action.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and Corporal Works of Mercy

We are called to share God's abundance with others. Catholic Social Teaching and the Corporal Works of Mercy offer two gospel frameworks for responding to the needs of others. Through CST, we are invited to reflect not only on charity but on creating systems that prevent suffering and promote equity. The Corporal Works of Mercy offer tangible ways like feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, etc. Together, they are a compass for caring for the vulnerable and marginalized through observances such as the following:

World Homeless Day - October 10th - Raises awareness about the needs of people experiencing homelessness

World Food Day - October 16th - calling for global collaboration in creating a peaceful, sustainable, prosperous, food secure future.

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty - October 17th - Ending social and institutional maltreatment

World Mission Sunday - October 19th - To raise awareness about the missionary activity of the Church



[READ MORE ABOUT THESE IMPORTANT ISSUES HERE..](#)

And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Matthew 25:40

Beyond the Bake Sale:

Fresh recipes for Council Fun and Growth



Visible, Approachable, and Thriving: St. Justin Martyr's **Blue Weekend** Membership Success

On the weekend of May 24–25, 2025, the Catholic Women's League at St. Justin Martyr Parish in London, Ontario, turned a simple idea into an inspiring innovation. Their "**Blue Weekend**" membership drive proved that they could find new, vibrant ways to grow the League and share its mission.

Rather than setting up a booth or relying on word-of-mouth, members immersed themselves fully into parish life. Over 35% of the council took part by serving in visible ministries—Eucharistic Ministers, Greeters, Readers, and Coffee Sunday hosts. Each proudly wore their CWL pins, nametags, sashes, and of course, the colour **blue**. This simple but striking act of witness let parishioners see the League as a living, active presence in the church community.

At the same time, a **four-minute silent PowerPoint presentation** looped before each Mass. It told the story of the council's past year—highlighting acts of service, faith development, and advocacy for social justice. Parishioners could see at a glance, the many charities supported and the impact of CWL initiatives. The most important slide extended an invitation: All Catholic women 16 and older were warmly welcomed to join.

To reinforce the message, a **special CWL newsletter** was handed out to women at every Mass. It not only shared what the council had accomplished but also highlighted opportunities to be part of upcoming initiatives.



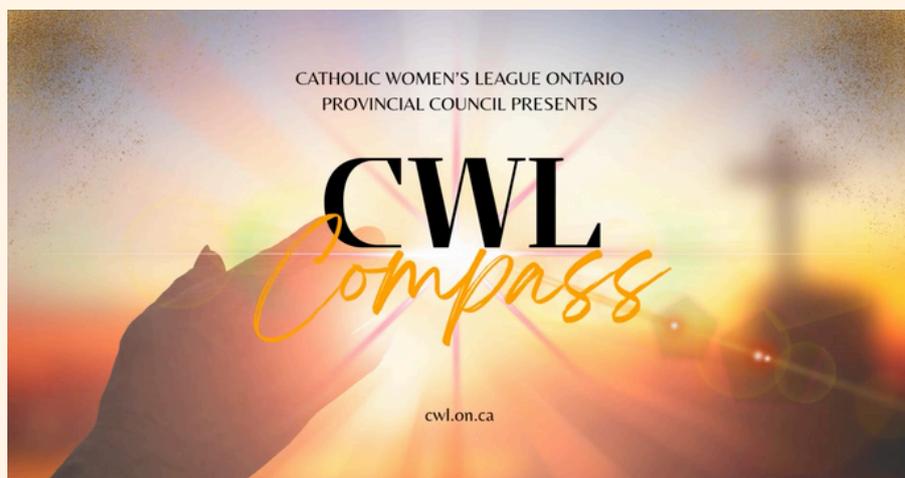
Members were present after each Mass to answer questions, gather emails, and personally connect with interested women. Those who shared their contact information received timely follow-up through email or phone calls, ensuring no expression of interest was lost.

The invitation extended even further. Prospective members were welcomed to the council's year-end potluck dinner in June, where they could experience CWL fellowship in an informal, joyful setting. Several women attended, and many have since become members.

The results were outstanding: **over 20 new members joined, representing a 20% increase in paid membership.** Building on this success, the council is already preparing to host another **Blue Weekend** in October 2025.



St. Justin Martyr's **Blue Weekend** demonstrates the power of **creative, relational outreach.** By making the League visible, approachable, and welcoming, the council not only grew its numbers but also deepened its connection with the parish. It's a shining example of how thinking outside the box—and Beyond the Bake Sale—can bring new life to our councils and ensure the League continues to flourish for years to come!



At our 78th Annual Provincial Convention, we were thrilled to announce the launch of the Ontario CWL Compass Podcast!

We've already recorded inspiring conversations with Bishop Alan Campeau, Dr. Josephine Lombardi, diocesan spiritual advisors, national officers, and more!

Now our talented Co-Communications lead, Daniela Carlino, is weaving it all together, which will take a bit of time – so stay tuned! Please keep this exciting new project in your prayers—we can't wait to share it with you! ❤️