



WELCOME TO THE
ON-LINE NEWSLETTER

We're so glad you're here!

Welcoming Our New National President with Gratitude and Joy

With hearts full of joy and gratitude, the Ontario Provincial Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada and all CWL members across Ontario, extends a warm and enthusiastic welcome to Betty Colaneri, our new National CWL President! A proud daughter of St. Catharines Ontario, Betty brings with her a deep faith, a servant's heart, and a wealth of experience that will bless our League across Canada.



The newly announced national theme, ***"Ignite Your Passion. Empower His Mission,"*** will officially begin in January 2026. This powerful call invites us to embrace our gifts with fresh enthusiasm and, when the time comes, to boldly live out the mission God has entrusted to us as members of the CWL. We are excited to journey with her as she leads us with grace, energy, and inspiration.





At this moment of new beginnings, we also offer our heartfelt thanks to Shari Guinta, our outgoing National President, for her dedicated and compassionate leadership over the past two years. Through her theme, "Here I Am, Lord. Send Me," Shari encouraged us to say "yes" to God's call with courage.

Her focus on mental health was both timely and necessary, gently reminding us of the importance of caring for ourselves and one another – body, mind, and spirit. Shari's faithful witness and wise leadership have left a lasting mark on our hearts and our League..

Ontario is truly blessed and proud to have such remarkable women serve at the national level. Their leadership reflects the deep faith, strength, and compassion that flourish within our League.

As we look ahead, may we continue to step up in leadership, serve with joy, unity, and purpose. Let us keep Betty, Shari, and the national executive in our prayers, asking Our Lady of Good Counsel to intercede for them and guide their work.



Together, let us ignite our passion and empower God's mission – joyfully and faithfully!

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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:



[Ontario Provincial Facebook Page](#)



[Instagram](#)



[Ontario Provincial Website](#)



[YouTube](#)

Colleen's Message of Joy

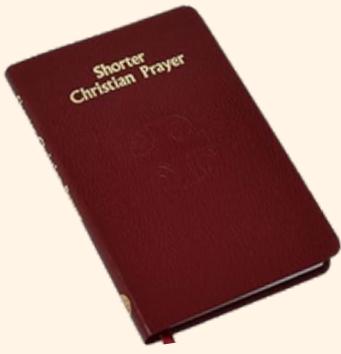
My dear sisters ... I want to first welcome Bishop Alan Campeau as Provincial Spiritual Advisor for the remainder of my term and thank Bishop Thomas Dowd for covering until Thunder Bay was appointed a Bishop. These two Bishops are wonderful at connecting with our members and sharing spiritual teachings. Bishop Campeau is in Rome this month for orientation and guidance as he undertakes his new role of Bishop. He will provide an article to introduce himself for the October newsletter.



The question I ask myself is, where has the summer gone? A blink and here we are facing the fall. I had no idea what to write for this September issue until I wrote these two lines. Then sitting staring at my spiritual wall, I received a Holy Spirit nudge. I recalled a portion of the Shorter Christian Prayer book from yesterday; Psalm 90 May we live in the radiance of God. Psalm 90 May we live in the radiance of God. I quote, "Our life is over like a sigh ... And most of these are emptiness and pain. They pass swiftly and we are gone ... Make us know the shortness of our life that we may gain wisdom of heart ... In the morning, fill us with your love; we shall exult and rejoice all our days. Give us joy to balance our affliction for the years when we knew misfortune."

I believe this is the secret to living the Joy of the Gospel. Our faith tells us that the Lord only wants good for us, He has a plan for us and formed us even before we were in our mother's womb, and all we experience in this 'short' earthly life will prepare us to enter eternal life with Him.

What a beautiful thought that all our afflictions are preparing us for eternal life. The length of our earthly life in comparison is a pittance to offer to our Lord for that great gift. I remember consoling my children around the 9/11 event. Telling them to take the gift of baptism off the shelf where we sometimes put it when things are going well. I advised them to use the faith it brought, to know that all will be well and to keep it with them always. There is no point in trying to understand some of what we experience in this world. Rather, we must trust that all is for a divine purpose and all will be well again in this world or in the next but all in God's time.



As you begin another year for God and Canada, I leave you with the Psalm-prayer from yesterday' Shorter Christian Prayer, and a shout out to Shari Guinta, Past National President, for gifting the national executive with the book.

"Eternal Father, you give us life despite our guilt and even add days and years to our lives in order to bring us wisdom. Make us love and obey you, so that the works of our hands may always display what your hands have done, until the day we gaze upon the beauty of your face." Ant. 2 "From the farthest bounds of the earth, may God be praised!"

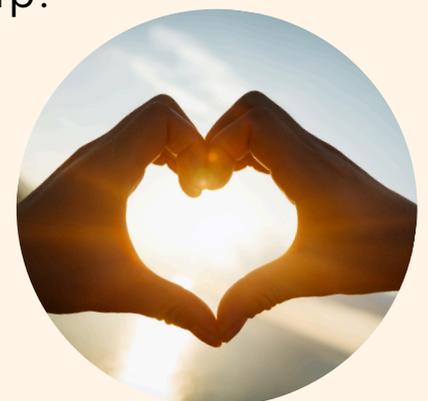


Did You Encounter Christ?

That was the question Rev. Liborio Amaral, Toronto Diocesan Spiritual Advisor, asked in his homily on Thursday morning at the National Convention in Toronto - at some time during the four days of the National Convention did we encounter Christ? I can say I encountered Christ in a way I had not expected at this convention.

While walking to the provincial dinner with all the members from Ontario, one member fell and seriously injured her leg. She was unable to get up and an ambulance was called. Unfortunately, this occurred during rush hour and the ambulance took a while to come and assist us. We were blocking a large portion of the sidewalk at this busy time and no one said an unkind word or comment.

During our wait we were asked by strangers walking by if we needed assistance. This happened so often that I was amazed. Individuals—young, mature, dressed in business attire or casual all asking if they could help. In the biggest city in Ontario, where it is perceived that people are more absorbed in their own lives, that it is more dangerous to live here, people showed their caring. Thank you, Toronto, for this unexpected encounter with Christ.



*Submitted by Wilma Vanderzwaag
OPC Administrative Assistant*

Vice-Presidents Corner

OPC Vice-President

Karen McDonald

The late Pope Francis often reminded us that caring for creation is our responsibility.

In July, as I was packing my vehicle to go the provincial convention, I noticed a new plant in my flower bed. I had no idea what it was since I didn't recall planting it. I took a photo and googled it. To my great surprise, it was a sunflower! A bird must have dropped a seed and created a beautiful sunflower (the bees were happy).



In August, when I returned home from the national convention, I went for 'T' visit with a good friend and CWL member who is awaiting surgery. I noticed sunflowers in her garden and I was told that she hadn't planted them either ... imagine that!

I started thinking about membership in the League. We are asked to plant the seed (our welcome), to nurture it (our mentorship), and watch it flourish (participation). We are all seeds planted by God ... all unique ... all from the same Creator. I took photos of my sunflower and of my friend's sunflowers ... each one is unique.



Membership in the Catholic Women's League is a gift ... like the beautiful sunflower.

If you haven't yet experienced the sisterhood of the League, I encourage you to learn more about our organization. With Fall approaching (my favourite season), councils will be gathering again which is a perfect opportunity to **join us in faith, service and social justice.**



Reach out to me at any time ...
opcvicepresident2024@gmail.com



Pearls of Wisdom

OPC Past President

Linda Squarzolo

The summer of 2025 will go down in history for a number of reasons. Tragedy affected parts of Texas with flooding and the loss of many lives. Forest fires in many parts of our country, from east to west, caused significant damage to forests, homes and businesses and disrupted the lives of thousands of evacuees. The summer will also be remembered for its heat and humidity. Climate change is becoming noticeable in so many ways.

The summer of 2025 will also be remembered by many League members. In July, the provincial convention was held in London. Everyone was inspired by the messages of speakers and the workshops that were presented. Officers and diocesan presidents were asked to present their reports in a fun way ... and they certainly delivered! The convention left the 250+ attendees feeling entertained and enriched by the experience.

In August the national convention was held in Toronto, Ontario, as well as the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO). Keynote speakers addressed the issues of migrant workers, mental health and programs to eliminate homelessness. Provincial presidents presented inspiring workshops. Masses were held daily, led by the five bishops attending the convention along with many priests. Following elections, a new national executive was installed with Betty Colaneri as the new national president.

After attending these conventions, I feel inspired. Getting to befriend members from across the province and country and hearing about their League experiences, encourages me to embark on new projects. I wish all our members could attend these conventions and feel the sense of sisterhood which stretches across our great country.



Minute By Minute

OPC Secretary

Lisa Henry



The Joy of Serving Together in the Secretary/Communications Role

*“Committees are not meant to be of one, but of many.
And in the many, we find joy.”*

One of the greatest blessings of the Catholic Women’s League is how our gifts multiply when shared. Too often, executive roles are seen as one-woman jobs, but they were never meant to be that way. Committees—whether parish, diocesan, or provincial—come alive when many voices and hands work together, each offering something unique and valuable.

The secretary/communications role is a beautiful example. At first glance, it may appear the role is simply recording minutes or managing communication. While these duties are important, the real joy lies in collaboration—building bonds of sisterhood and watching how ideas grow when shared.

Every member brings something special. Some have an eye for detail, ensuring accuracy in records. Others shine in engagement, bringing awareness to our League. Still others offer creativity, inspiring members in fresh ways. Each gift enriches the whole, making the work lighter and the results stronger. This harmony mirrors God’s creation: just as every plant, tree, and creature contributes to the beauty of the natural world, so too does every member add vitality to our League. Alone our efforts may seem small, but together they blossom into something greater than we could imagine.

I experienced this joy firsthand with the many gifted women who are a part of the Provincial Communications Committee this past year and most recently, the Minutes Review Committee after our provincial convention.

Preparing clear, accurate minutes is a huge task, but it became lighter and more fruitful because of the dedication of a small group of women who shared their talents so generously.



The secretary/communications role is not only about recording, reporting, and managing communication—it is about fostering connections, building trust, and creating spaces where voices are heard and remembered. It is about sisterhood, about discovering that the work is never ours alone, and about celebrating the blessings that flow when we invite others to journey with us.

Like creation itself, our League thrives when nurtured together. May we continue to serve with joy, caring for one another and for our common home, trusting that when many come together in service, God multiplies the fruits of our labour.

🌸 **Special Thanks** 🌸

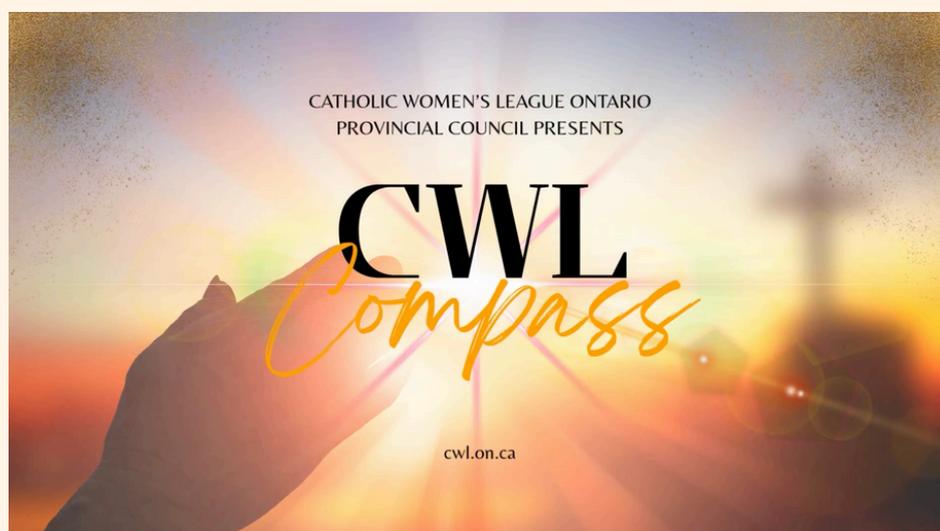
With heartfelt gratitude, we recognize the dedicated members who served on the Minutes Review Committee:

- Marcelle Beaulieu
- Joyce Cotter
- Glenda Klein
- Michelle Morrow



Your teamwork lifted hearts and strengthened our League!

The Ontario CWL Compass Podcast is Coming!



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! 💙

Our Faith and Caring for God's Creation

*"Humans are commanded to care for God's creation."
Gen 2:15*

Our faith emphasizes the importance of caring for God's creation. God entrusted us as stewards to protect the earth's resources as a divine gift and our responsibility. "We are people of God Walking Together." United we can do amazing things.

Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'* "On Care for Our Common Home" was the first Papal letter on the environment and the relationship between humanity and the earth. Recently the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, celebrated the first "Mass for the Care of Creation", on July 9, 2025. This Mass "calls us to be faithful stewards of what God has entrusted to us – not only in daily choices and public policies, but also in our prayer, our worship, and our way of living in the world".

The "Season of Creation" is celebrated from 1 September to 4 October 2025.

The essential principle of Catholic social teaching is the concept of community and the common good. As Catholic women whether we perform Corporal Works of Mercy with our hands, Spiritual Works of Mercy with our minds and hearts, or both, we do them as an expression of our love of God.

With faith and love, we women in the League demonstrate our understanding and awareness of the issues in the care of Mother Earth through ministry and service. We strive to respond to social, economic and environmental injustices in our communities, province, country and around the world. Our Councils develop resolutions to address social justice issues, we fund-raise for numerous organizations in our communities, across the province and Canada and overseas for the common good. Giving of ourselves runs deep, we are nurturing by nature. [**READ MORE HERE...**](#)



*WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
FOR THE CARE OF CREATION*

**We praise you, O God, Creator of all things,
whose mystery unfolds in “a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop,
in a poor person’s face.”**

**Jesus, your Son, taught us to wonder
as he made his way throughout the land,
contemplating the beauty of creation.**

**We pray, O God, that you may stir in us
a reverent awareness of our invisible link with the entire created world.**

**We pray for humility—
to remember that we, too, are created and are not creation’s masters.**

**We pray for compassion—
for open eyes and hearts to welcome those forced to flee from their
homes due to rising sea levels and drought.**

**We pray for repentance—
so that our thirst for power and domination
may be transformed into service.**

**We pray for simplicity—
and the will to turn from our greed
which impacts vulnerable people everywhere.**

**We pray for cultural conversion—
that we may simplify our lifestyles, reduce pollution and waste,
and exercise prudence in our decision making.**

**We pray for policy changes—
that as a nation and world we may work together
to reverse the course of climate change.**

**Our hearts ache as we ponder:
“The world sings of an infinite Love: how can we fail to care for it?”**

**We praise you, O God,
confident that you work in our hearts and through our actions,
so that we may better care for our common home.**

Amen.

Prayer inspired by Pope Francis’ Laudate Deum (Praise God)



service

Sue Lubowitz

*"I alone cannot change the world,
but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."
St. Teresa of Calcutta*

I no longer have children anticipating the first day of school but September still gives me "new year" vibes. I have just returned from the 105th Annual Convention of The Catholic Women's League and was reminded of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) "**Device-Free Family Meals**" that was introduced to the League in December 2024. We were asked to share with WUCWO about our experiences. More details can be found at <https://www.cwl.ca/wucwo-device-free-family-meals-campaign/>. This campaign was part of WUCWO's 2023-2027 set of resolutions and dealt with family with the intent to keep people connected.

Cell phones are everywhere. Globally, 1.3 billion Smartphones were sold in 2023. Statistics Canada data indicates a significant increase in cell phone ownership and usage in Canada, with cell phones largely replacing landlines in households and growing in popularity across all age groups, especially among seniors. In 2021, 93.9% of households reported having at least one cell phone, a substantial increase from 2019. A new study from OntarioCasinos.com discovered that the average Canadian will spend 70.46 days each year on mobile apps, or 14.46 years of their life if they use mobile devices for 75 years.

Smartphones, impact social connectivity between people, and also impact the environment throughout their entire lifecycle, from the energy-intensive mining of rare metals like cobalt, lithium and gold, which causes pollution and habitat destruction, to the manufacturing and shipping processes that contribute significantly to carbon emissions, and finally to the creation of electronic waste (e-waste) when devices are discarded improperly. Discarded devices can leach toxic materials like lead and arsenic into soil and water. The consumption of electricity for data transfer also adds to their environmental footprint. The short average lifespan of Smartphones and low recycling rates mean millions of phones end up in landfills annually.

There are also Social and Ethical Concerns with cell phone usage. **READ MORE...**

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Hilarion Mitchell

"The cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor are one and the same." Laudato Si'



The 2025 Season of Creation (Sept. 1st to Oct. 4th) theme is "Peace with Creation" with the symbol "Garden of Peace", inspired by Isaiah 32:14-18. It urges reconciliation between humans and the environment through justice and transformation.

September marks the beginning of autumn and often includes ecological justice, climate care, and stewardship of creation. It is harvesting month that celebrates the fruits of the land from grains, fruits, and vegetables. It encourages gratitude for the Earth's abundance.

In Pope Francis encyclical *Laudato Si'*, he calls for an "integral ecology," where care for people and care for the planet is inseparable. He condemns environmental destruction as a form of injustice against the poor and future generations.

Key Themes of Ecological Justice in the Season of Creation

- Environmental degradation is a moral crisis
- Climate change is a social justice issue
- Biodiversity loss and pollution are injustices against creation
- True justice includes intergenerational responsibility

Ecological sins (e.g. overconsumption, exploitation) require repentance and conversion [**READ MORE HERE...**](#)

Practical Implications

- Advocating for just policies (economic, environmental, social)
- Forgiving debts and supporting fair trade
- Promoting care for creation as an act of justice
- Fostering community healing and reconciliation

Church and Member Calls to Action

- Pray for ecological conversion in individuals and communities
- Advocate for policies that protect the environment and the poor

Educate about *Laudato Si'* and environmental justice in catechesis and liturgy [**READ MORE WAYS TO ACTION...**](#)



Social Justice Award

2025 Ontario Provincial Council Social Justice Award Recipient

Syl(vie) Roach ... A Tireless Advocate for Social Justice

For the past 35 years, Syl has been a dedicated and deeply engaged member of the St. Thomas Aquinas Council, St. Catharines, St. Catharines Diocese. Her unwavering commitment to social justice has made her a strong voice for those often left unheard (the working poor, the homeless, the addicted, the mentally ill, and other marginalized members of society).



Syl(vie) Roach with Deedee Alexandre, St. Catharines Diocesan President

Syl's leadership and compassion are rooted in action:

- She has been actively involved with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, where she served as President for four years, leading initiatives to support those living in poverty and advocating for systemic change.
- As a community and parish advocate, Syl assists neighbours and parishioners in understanding and defending their tenant rights, helping many retain secure housing in the face of eviction or unsafe conditions.
- Her current advocacy centres on mental health and homelessness, where she has expanded her reach by working with key local organizations such as *Start Me Up Niagara* and *Queenston Neighbours*. Through these partnerships, she continues to raise awareness and provide tangible support to those most in need.
- Syl has engaged all levels of government through formal presentations, letter campaigns, and petitions, consistently spotlighting the housing crisis and calling for justice-oriented solutions within her community.
- A steadfast supporter of Catholic education.

Syl's life of service reflects her deep faith in action, to advocate and serve.

2025 Ontario Provincial Council Resolutions Outcomes

Three resolutions from Toronto and Sault Ste. Marie dioceses were presented at the 78th Annual Ontario Provincial Convention/AMM in July in London. Two of which were adopted and forwarded to the national resolutions sub-committee. They were subsequently adopted as 2025.01 and 2025.04 at the national level. Thank you to all members from the originating councils, diocesan and provincial resolutions sub-committees and executives, and members for gifting the League with these timely social justice issues to advocate for all Canadians.

2025 National Resolutions

The four resolutions below were adopted at the 105th National Convention/AMM in August in Toronto and are accessible through the link and posted on the national website. Members and councils are encouraged to read, study and work on their action plans.

- 2025.01 [Federal Government to Create a Unified and Centralized Cybercrime Reporting System for Individuals in Canada](#)
- 2025.02 [Amend the Canadian Criminal Code Section 223\(1\) defining when a child becomes a human being](#)
- 2025.03 [Strengthen Support for Chaplains to Provide Faith-Based Care to Members and Families of the Canadian Armed Forces](#)
- 2025.04 [Federal Government to Complete the Development of the Office of Palliative Care](#)

Resolutions Meetings

OPC 2024-2025 meetings with ACBO and Local MPP.

- Assembly of Catholic Bishops (ACBO): Colleen Martin, OPC President and Karen McDonald, OPC Vice President met with the bishops on October 8, 2024. The meeting included discussions on the 2024 provincial and national resolutions. Colleen sent a letter to Doug Ford, Ontario Premier and Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, to bring all the Ontario resolutions to their attention and request meetings with them and/or other Ministers.
- MPP Meeting/Contact: As OPC social justice chair, initiated contact with my local MPP's office in November 2024 with the first in-person meeting held in late June 2025. Provided an overview of OPC and summary of the 2024 resolutions. Active planning underway for an OPC delegation to visit the Ontario Legislature in Spring 2026 for a bipartisan meeting with ministers and their staff.

[READ DEADLINE DATES FOR 2026 RESOLUTIONS HERE..](#)

Annual National Report Survey Highlights

On June 30th, the Ontario Provincial Council posted a survey on the OPC website, inviting members and councils to share their thoughts on the **Annual National Report Survey**. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who took the time to respond! Your input means so much—it helps us understand what councils need and how we can make this important resource even stronger.

This data represents those who responded to the survey across Ontario:

- 31 councils reported that they submitted their annual reports, while only 3 were unable to do so due to timing or technical challenges.
- When asked about the reporting experience, most councils were satisfied: a few found it difficult, but the majority rated the process good to very good.
- Councils especially appreciated the clarity of instructions and the support available. The ease of online access and relevance of questions received mixed reviews, reminding us where improvements can be made.
- Planning ahead was a common theme: 8 councils planned well in advance, 16 somewhat, and 6 not at all.
- Suggestions for improvement included shifting the reporting period to January–February, September, or late October.

If you didn't get a chance to contribute, it's not too late! Add your voice here: [Help Shape the Future of Annual Reporting](#)

Your input is invaluable and will help us continue to refine the process so that it works smoothly for everyone.

Thank you for sharing your experiences so generously!