



WELCOME TO THE

ON-LINE NEWSLETTER

We're so glad you're here!

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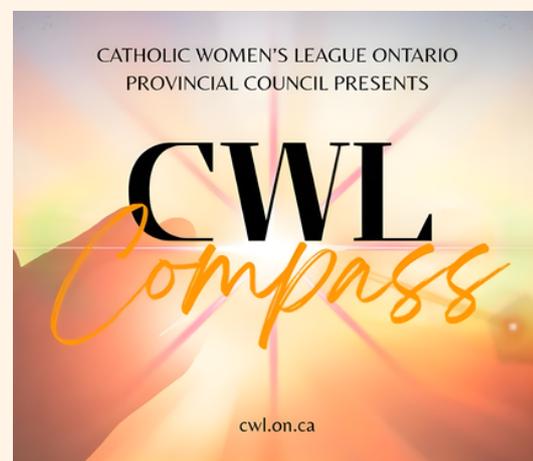
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Introducing the Ontario Provincial CWL Compass Podcast!

Looking for inspiration, insight, and a fresh way to connect with the League? The Compass Podcast is here to guide you! Our first two episodes feature powerful conversations with **OPC Spiritual Advisor Bishop Alan Campeau** and **National Past President Margaret Ann Jacobs**—voices of wisdom you won't want to miss!

Tune in, subscribe, and share with your sisters in faith:

Watch on YouTube: https://youtu.be/w_CncVl-inl?si=6MfAivzsBF9k_pZr

Listen on Spotify: <https://spotify.link/N5iiUtLvWxb>

Find us on Amazon Music: <https://music.amazon.ca/podcasts/90825266-27fd-4757-8728-07826dcf451f/cwl-compass-podcast>

Let the Ontario CWL Compass Podcast be your new way to journey with the CWL—listen today and help spread the word!

Colleen's Message of Joy

As I write this, the Advent season is fast approaching along with the end of the Jubilee Year of Hope.



With the extended darkness, this is the time of year when many struggle with maintaining light and hope in their hearts and lives. If one is in touch with world affairs, it is not helpful watching humans suffering in more than 100 war torn areas of the world. All in the name of power over land and peoples. In this darkness, we long for peace both within and without.

Our hope is based in faith that no strife, danger, fear or enemy is more powerful than the God of Love who is born in our midst. This tiny, infant Christ has the power to bring peace into our broken world to bring love to our broken hearts. [Word Made Flesh 2025, Christine Way Skinner, Living with Christ]

I encourage you to not only use the Advent season for internal reflection but to find ways to influence the world for good; take that light out from under the bushel basket [Matthew 5:14-16] and share it with the world.



This could look like distributing warm mitts and hats to the unhoused on the streets, asking their name, and offering to pray for them.

You could extend an offer to pray for someone you see in a difficult situation. Whatever you choose, make it something that shares your faith beyond internal reflection.

Let us pray together: + Holy Spirit, your gifts were given to me at baptism and strengthened in confirmation. Whisper again to me that I am your beloved child, so that I may fully serve you and my neighbour. Amen.



May your Advent and Christmas seasons be filled with many blessings and gentle smiles.

Soluen Morte



December Prayer

Heavenly Father,
We come to you with joy and gratitude
as we celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Thank you for the light that broke into darkness
with His humble birth,
bringing hope to the world.
We thank you for Your great love shown through Jesus,
for His teachings,
His example, and the hope He gives.
As we celebrate this holy day,
fill us with the wonder of His coming
and the peace He brings.
Help us to share His love and message with others,
just as the shepherds did.
May we, like the wise men, recognize
and worship Him in our lives.
We pray for the peace of Christ to reign
in our hearts and in the world.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Mix from Christian sites

Vice-Presidents Corner

OPC Vice-President

Karen McDonald

Joy ... Hope ... Reflection

Advent is a beautiful season of joyful expectation, hope, and of personal reflection. Who better to bring joy and hope into our lives than the Blessed Virgin Mary, who prayed, reflected, and then answered 'yes' to serve.

As members of the League, we are called to imitate Mary's example in our daily lives.



Recently, at my parish, I welcomed a young woman attending her first CWL meeting. As we entered the hall, I introduced myself and explained how we choose monthly prayer partners. She thanked me and went to sit at a table by herself. I invited her to sit with me and others joined us. During the meeting, she asked several questions since she wanted to know more about our organization.

I learned that my new friend is a member, but I would have gladly gifted her with a membership. When I turned 16, I was gifted with my first membership (thanks Mom). At the time, I didn't know much about the Catholic Women's League, but I knew how important it was to my mother and grandmother. Fast forward 35 years ... I now appreciate the sisterhood that it offers to each of us.

Consider giving the gift of the League to a family member, friend, co-worker, neighbour, or new parishioner. It is a beautiful way to say welcome to The Catholic Women's League of Canada. I know in my life, it is a gift that keeps on giving.

Membership Gift Certificate (#206)

Available from the CWL e-Shop online store (<https://eshop.cwl.ca/Default.aspx>)

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Membership Gift Certificate

_____, you have been enrolled as a member of
(name of recipient)

(name of council) council, in _____
(city/town)

This membership is valid for the year _____

As a gift from _____
(council president)



Pearls of Wisdom

OPC Past President

Linda Squarzolo

Mentoring

At this time of year, many councils are focusing on end-of-year tasks, like annual reports, the Christmas/Advent social or the end of their two-year term of office.

Parish council elections are sometimes held in December so the new executive can be installed in January. Other parishes choose have their elections in the New Year. Either choice is acceptable. Diocesan elections are held in the spring at the diocesan convention.

One of the concerns, when holding elections, is actually having a choice of candidates standing for each executive position. In order for this to happen, members must be mentored long before the time of elections.



Here are some suggestions to prepare members for leadership roles:

- When you notice a member with leadership qualities, compliment her and encourage her to consider letting her name stand for office now or in the future.
- Members of the executive should invite her to be on their committee. Assign certain responsibilities to her and allow her to shadow the executive member.
- Encourage other members of the executive to do the same.
- Hold a public speaking workshop so members become comfortable using a microphone and speaking in front of a small group.
- When a new executive is elected, provide an orientation workshop.
- Have the person who previously held the position offer support and advice to the newly-elected executive member.
- Encourage members to attend conventions – diocesan, provincial and/or national, to meet members from other councils and learn more about the League at all levels.
- Encourage attendance at on-line meetings and development days.

I wish you well with your search for good leaders and success in the future of your council.

I wish you and your family the joy of the Christmas season and many blessings in the New Year.



Announcing the OPC OneSite Website Redesign!

OneSite: One Home for All Councils - We're pleased to announce that Kate O'Quinn, Toronto Diocesan President, and Patricia Clizia, Sault Ste. Marie Diocesan President, will serve as co-leads for the OneSite website redesign project. Working in close partnership with the Provincial President, Vice-President, Secretary, and all Diocesan Presidents, they will guide this initiative with vision, collaboration, and a deep commitment to member needs. Together, they are shaping a unified digital space that reflects the heart of our League.



Kate O'Quinn



Patricia Clizia

The redesign, guided by the talented team at Clark Communications, will feature a refreshed layout, improved navigation, and enhanced accessibility. Most importantly, OneSite will bring provincial content and all diocesan council content together in one place. Members will no longer need to search across two separate websites—the provincial site and their diocesan site—for information. Everything will be conveniently located on a single platform, making resources easier to find and engagement more seamless.

Over the next year, leading up to convention, we will provide regular updates on the progress of this exciting transformation. Stay tuned as we build a digital home that reflects our mission and strengthens member connection.



Minute By Minute

OPC Secretary
Lisa Henry



Advent and the Jubilee of Hope: Walking Together in Faith

As we enter the season of Advent, I write to you with gratitude and anticipation. Advent is always a time of waiting and preparation, but this year it carries a special resonance as we journey towards the conclusion of the Jubilee Year of Hope. Together, we have journeyed as Pilgrims of Hope, carrying Christ's light into our parishes, families, and communities.

From the perspective of the secretary role and communications, this jubilee has been a reminder that hope is not only lived but also shared. Every announcement, newsletter, and message we send is more than information—it is an invitation to walk together in faith. Synodality calls us to dialogue, to listen deeply to one another, and to recognize that the Spirit speaks through every member. As secretary and communicator, I have seen how clarity and warmth in our words can strengthen bonds across Ontario, ensuring that no member feels alone on the pilgrim path.

Advent itself is a season of communication: the prophets proclaiming the coming Messiah, the angel announcing good news, the Church calling us to prepare. Each candle lit on the Advent wreath is a message of hope, perseverance, and joy. In our League work, we echo that message when we craft resources, share updates, and celebrate the contributions of our members.



The Jubilee Year of Hope has challenged us to be resilient and creative. We have adapted to new platforms, embraced digital tools, and found ways to keep our voices united even when distance separates us. Synodality reminds us that communication is not one-way—it is dialogue, mutual listening, and shared discernment. As Pilgrims of Hope, we have learned that communication is not simply about efficiency—it is about encouragement, inclusion, and witness.

This Advent, let us give back to one another by practicing synodal communication:

- **Listen with hope.** Make space for another member's story, trusting that God speaks through them.
- **Encourage with words.** Share a note of gratitude or affirmation that uplifts someone's journey.
- **Dialogue with openness.** In meetings or conversations, invite perspectives and discern together.
- **Witness with joy.** Use your communications—whether a bulletin, email, or social media post—to spread hope

By giving back through dialogue, we embody synodality and carry the Jubilee spirit forward. Our words become gifts of hope, preparing the way of the Lord.



Open Hand for Advent

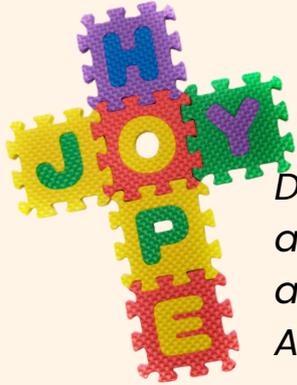


At an Advent retreat, the priest that was the presenter asked each person attending to write down on a slip of paper a word that captures what is keeping us from getting closer to God. It could be fear, anger, resentment or an attitude. We then folded the paper and held it in our one hand and made a fist.

The priest then began to read a Scripture passage and give us a reflection on this reading. The whole time we maintained the fist with the paper in it. It didn't take long for my hand to ache, then a little while later my hand grew numb. Finally, my hand started to shake and it was at that point we were told to open our hands. It had stiffened and was hard to open. The lesson to us that day was that to hold on to resentments, fears or a bad attitude can cause us to become paralyzed.

Advent is a time of receiving. It is hard to receive if your hands are clasped shut. Begin Advent with your hands open and with this prayer:

Holy Spirit, open my hands, my eyes, my ears, all my senses and all of my heart so that I will be ready to receive all your Advent blessings. Amen.



New Beginnings

Dear Jesus, this Advent, help us slow down, listen to your voice, and focus on what's really important. We place our hope in you as we prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth at Christmas. Amen

December is a month filled with hope, joy and new beginnings.

The Year of Jubilee was an opportunity for us to be 'Pilgrimages of Hope'. All over the world Catholics made time for spiritual renewal and participated in pilgrimages both large and small. We celebrated locally in our dioceses, at national shrines and in Rome with a hope to deepen our relationship with God.

We focused our faith and renewed our hope with families, friends, neighbours and our councils. Indeed, hope did not disappoint!

Have you done all that you wanted to do? There is still time, sometimes simple acts of faith are the most fulfilling, alone or with family, friends or your council.

Our hope is that the spiritual fruits we cultivated during the Year of Jubilee will continue.

Our Church helps us to feel hopeful even though for some, this time of year is harder, continue to reflect on Jesus and be hope-filled.

With the arrival of Advent, we encounter a time of reflection, prayer, and preparation for the coming of Christ. Advent is a season of hope, a time of expectation, when we prepare our home and our hearts for Jesus's coming, to joyfully celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day.

Each week by lighting a candle we recognize the gifts that have been given to us as we journey from darkness into light.



Once again God is calling us into his relationship. We pray to have an open heart and hear Gods' call. *"Bless my efforts, Father, to open my mind and heart to you this Advent season, so I may grow in my understanding of your word."*

In this busy month, give yourself time to prepare and reflect on the real gift of Christmas, the birth of our Saviour, Jesus. Listen to the Word and give yourself time in ways that will embrace Advent and let God work his wonders. *"Lord, in days to come fill my heart with hope and joy."*

Advent is more than a countdown to Christmas. It is an invitation to slow down and remember the hope, love, joy and peace that cannot be found under the tree. It is a celebration of Jesus' birth!



Find some joy filled time with family and friends and a wonderful blessed Christmas!

May your New Year shine brightly with hope, love and Joy!

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

Start to plan now to attend!

Ontario Provincial Convention in **Thunder Bay, July 5–8, 2026**

National Convention in **Halifax August 9–12, 2026.**

You won't be disappointed—see you there!

Hotel Registration for the OPC 79th Annual Provincial Convention

LOCATION: 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

The Advent Wreath



The Advent wreath holds four candles, three purple and one pink, representing hope, peace, joy and love.

It seems appropriate that the first week of Advent's purple candle, the Prophecy Candle, represents hope. Jesus wants us to experience hope for his coming.

The second week of Advent's purple candle, the Bethlehem Candle, represents Peace. Take time to be peaceful in prayer.

The third week of Advent's pink candle, the Shepherd's Candle represents Joy. On "Gaudete Sunday" reflect on the shepherd's Joy. Remember your joy in God's presence and in serving our Lord.

The fourth week of Advent's last purple candle is the Angel's Candle. This candle represents the ultimate love of God for sending his son, Jesus, the angelic message of "good news".

Reflect on Jesus' never-ending love for us as we prepare our hearts for Christmas.



Service and Gifting

"Love cannot remain by itself – it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action, and that action is service." Mother Teresa

This powerful quote explains why Catholic nonprofits exist—to transform love into concrete service. Pope Leo XIV began his papacy with a call to walk together in unity, love and shared mission. In his first homily as Pope, he shared a vision of the Church not as an institution above others, but one that walks with all people in humility and compassion. The Holy Father reminded us that each of us is called to be a "living stone," building the Church together through baptism, community, and diversity.

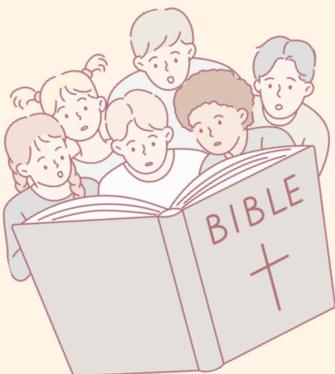
Amid the flurry of Christmas bazaars and other fund-raising events, parish councils will be determining what the proper stewardship of the funds should be. The League offers advice in that determination process: *"In financially supporting another organization, care should be taken that donated funds will be used by organizations that uphold Catholic teachings and values."* (National Manual of Policy and Procedures p.23)

"Show me where you put your money and I'll show you what your values are" is a popular saying that suggests a person's, organization's, or government's true priorities are reflected in their spending habits, not just in what they say they value. It is good practice to re-evaluate our spending habits/priorities on a regular basis. Parish Councils should do the same. Have giving needs changed for your council?



Has your council considered directing their funds to Catholic non-profits at home and abroad (including the four National Funds)? Here are a few reasons from <https://catholicconnect.care/catholic-nonprofits/>

- Faith-based service is rooted in Catholic social teaching and Gospel values
- They offer a comprehensive approach that addresses spiritual, physical and emotional needs.



- Because of the global reach of the established Church's networks and infrastructure, councils can increase the global impact
- Evangelization efforts share the Catholic faith with love and compassion
- Educational initiative promote human dignity and intellectual development
- Hunger relief programs feed millions worldwide annually
- Homeless shelter service provide dignity and hope to the most vulnerable among us
- Healthcare ministries serve the poor and marginalized communities

For a list of potential organizations that councils may wish to include in their budget process, visit the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops at <https://www.cccb.ca/the-catholic-church-in-canada/associated-organizations/>

For other charitable organizations, councils may wish to check how effective their donations will be. Charity Intelligence (<https://www.charityintelligence.ca/>) analyses and reviews publicly-available information on over 800 charities and evaluates them on different criteria. This includes financial statements, annual reports, tax filings and websites. Each charity is consistently rated given the standards set in Charity Intelligence's rating methodology. This provides donors with the knowledge to make informed giving decisions.

In a time when the effectiveness of global assistance is increasingly questioned by politicians, it's up to individuals to reinforce the concept that the assistance we provide through our CWL charitable donations, if well-executed, truly makes a difference in advancing the Church's mission.



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



SOCIAL JUSTICE

Hilarion Mitchell

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, Philippians 2:4–5

Advent, Christmas and Social Justice: Advent and Christmas invite us in service to others and care for our common home. We hope not only for personal salvation but for social renewal. Christ's birth in poverty urges us to welcome the excluded and challenge systems that deny others a place in society. We prepare for Christ by aligning our lives with God's vision of justice and compassion.

Myth of "Perfect" Christmas: Advent and Christmas are joyful for many, but for others can be bittersweet. Not all families or individuals are in safe, healthy or peaceful situations. Loneliness, isolation and mental illness may be a reality for others. It is a time that is portrayed as joyful, magical and perfect.



When one's life does not match that image, they may feel disconnected. We are called to support social justice causes during these liturgical seasons. This helps us see Christ in the poor, oppressed, suffering and overlooked.

Gender-Base Violence (GBV): Every 48 hours in Canada, a woman or girl is killed in an act of GBV and accounts for 240 women and girls murdered in 2024. Ninety-three (93%) of homicides were committed by a male intimate partner or family member of the victim.

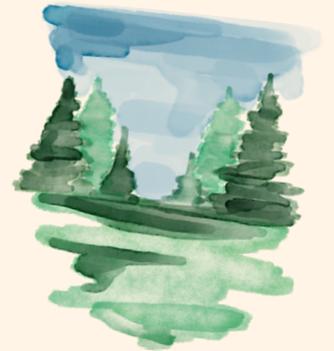
- Nov. 24-Dec. 10: 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign which began in 1991 to call out and speak up against GBV and to renew the commitment to ending violence against women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ communities.

Victims and survivors of GBV often face lasting personal, social, and economic impacts with consequences that can lead to intergenerational trauma.

▪ Dec. 6: National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women honours the victims of the Polytechnique Montréal tragedy in 1989 by wearing a white ribbon and observing a moment of silence at 11:00 am.

Environmental Stewardship

Environmental stewardship means celebrating the holidays in ways that care for and protect the Earth. It includes choosing reusable decorations, giving thoughtful and sustainable gifts, reducing waste, and conserving energy. By making small, eco-friendly choices during the season we help protect the environment for future generations while still enjoying the spirit of Advent, Christmas and New Year.



Reverse Social Justice Advent-Christmas-New Year Calendar

- Instead of receiving something each day collect a daily item (food, toiletries, warm clothing) for a local shelter or refugee centre.
- Dedicate each week to a different justice theme: hunger, housing, GBV, dignity of work, creation care.

December Social Justice Observance Days

- Nov. 24–Dec. 10: 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence
- Dec. 02: International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
- Dec. 06: National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women
- Dec.10: Human Rights Day
- Dec. 18: International Migrants Day
- Dec. 20: International Human Solidarity Day



106th Annual National Convention Fundraiser

August 9–12, 2026 – 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.

Price: \$10.00 per bracelet (+ postage or shipping)
Order yours today by emailing natnlcwlconv2026@gmail.com



Beyond the Bake Sale:

Fresh recipes for Council Fun and Growth

Our Lady of Good Counsel CWL at 75

Susan Brett, Secretary

Our Lady of Good Counsel CWL, Sault Ste. Marie

Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Sault Ste. Marie marked its 75th Anniversary this year, and the Catholic Women’s League was proud to be part of the celebrations. They embraced parish events as opportunities to connect with women, share their mission, and invite new members.

Their **Palm Sunday Bake Sale** became more than fundraising—it drew in parishioners who donated baking and joined conversations about the League. At Pentecost Diversity Day, members sold tickets, anniversary merchandise, and served meals, engaging warmly with parish families. They also spoke after Masses to highlight CWL activities and extend personal invitations.

Faith remains central to their service. Members supported First Communion and Confirmation, gifting candidates with religious mementos, and sponsored Mass for the Feast of the Blessed Virgin. At the Jubilation procession, our members proudly wore their sashes, representing the League with joy.

They continue to live their mission through social justice: collecting change for Development and Peace, providing food for disabled persons’ luncheons, and leading parish participation in the National CWL Petition initiative.

Through these efforts, their council is growing the League **“Beyond the Bake Sale”**—transforming parish life into opportunities for connection, witness, and welcoming new women into the CWL.

Beyond the Bake Sale:

Fresh recipes for Council Fun and Growth

Lynne Childerhouse, President

St. John the Evangelist CWL, Whitby

Our council embraced the “**Soap for Mother’s Day**” campaign for Canadian Food for Children, inviting parishioners to donate soap for families in need. The response was remarkable—144 lbs 2 oz, about 678 bars were collected!

Eight members participated, with two sisters at each Mass wearing their sashes. One of our newer members joined in for the first time, showing how service projects can draw women deeper into CWL life.



Support came from parish partners too. Ray, a Knight of Columbus, donated pails and bins for collection. Frances Robertson, from our sister parish St. Mary of the People in Oshawa, who regularly travels to Canadian Food for Children, joined Lynne Childerhouse to deliver the soap. Together they brought eight pails, two containers, and a \$100 donation to Dr. Simone.

This project went far beyond collection—it engaged parishioners, welcomed new members, and showed the CWL in action.

Share Your “Beyond the Bake Sale” Story!

Share the creative and innovative ways your council is growing in membership and engagement. The goal is to inspire one another by sharing practical stories that go beyond our traditional fundraisers and showcase how the League is reaching new women in meaningful ways. We would like to feature how councils are building community, welcoming new members, and trying fresh approaches to grow the League.

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!**