



WELCOME TO THE

# ON-LINE NEWSLETTER

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

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CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE ONTARIO  
PROVINCIAL COUNCIL PRESENTS

# CWL

# Compass

[cwl.on.ca](http://cwl.on.ca)

### **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!

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

**Watch on YouTube:**

<https://www.youtube.com/@OntarioProvincialCouncilCWL/podcasts>

**Listen on Spotify:** <https://open.spotify.com/show/6yi4vvSJKjCOsMlwBUwDzT>

**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

There is a small group still praying the Divine Mercy each morning for an end to the war in Ukraine (join any morning at 8 am EST by clicking here [Divine Mercy](#)). We joked about my delinquency with this newsletter and a recent water service line break at our home. This stimulated thoughts that allowed me to complete this message.



The seasons of Advent and Christmas and the theme for this newsletter are all signs of new beginnings. What a blessing that each year we celebrate the wonders of our faith throughout the liturgical year. We are reminded many times of God's mercy and love and the gift of starting anew with God's blessings at any time.

Having a little down moment yesterday due to our water and other life situations, I was overwhelmed by hope looking at the lit Christmas tree and the one ornament hanging there; a dove from the front of a card received from a League sister. For me, the dove is a sign of God with us, Emmanuel, God's salvation plan for all of creation. Artificial intelligence says, "The dove primarily symbolizes the Holy Spirit, representing divine inspiration, God's grace, and the presence of God, especially seen at Jesus' Baptism and Pentecost, but also signifies peace, purity, and the soul's journey, often with an olive branch from the story of Noah" ... new beginnings?

What will your new beginning look like as the calendar turns? Take time to sit quietly with God. Be open to His will for you. If we are open and watchful, God will reveal His plan for us, His divine plan for our life. This is what faith means to me; God will send signs if something is not His will.

This doesn't mean there won't be challenges, challenges are needed to form us for eternal life in His kingdom. We don't need to understand every challenge as they unfold, some become clear as we look back, and I believe all will be clear when we meet God face to face. May God bless your new beginnings this calendar year!

Rejoice in the Lord Always!  
Again, I say rejoice!  
Philippians 4:4



## Prayer for Passion on the Mission

Jesus, our Lord,  
we come to You with open hearts seeking passion for Your mission.  
Your deepest desire was to draw all peoples into the embrace of the  
Heavenly Father's Kingdom.  
Send Your Holy Spirit to ignite our hearts with the fire of Your  
passionate love,  
to empower us with enthusiasm for Your mission.  
May we be instruments of Your love to our sisters in the League, our  
families, parishes, and communities.  
As we journey together, may the flame in our hearts illuminate others  
to know Your eternal love.  
May we hold Your people in our hearts  
as we place all our trust in You.  
Sweet Jesus, each day as we lift up our hearts to You,  
we offer You our prayers, works, joys, and sufferings.  
We humbly ask that our offerings  
increase our faith, hope, and charity.  
O Most Sacred and Passionate Heart of Jesus,  
may our hearts and Yours beat together as one.  
We make this prayer to You, Jesus,  
in the power of the Father  
and in the union of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.  
Amen.

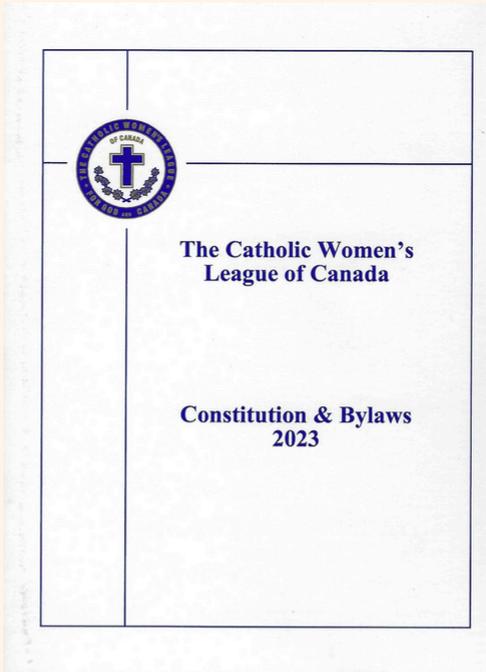


# Pearls of Wisdom

OPC Past President

Linda Squarzolo

## **Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws**



The Constitution and Bylaws (C&B) of The Catholic Women's League of Canada outlines the rules for how the League operates. The document can be found on the National website and printed copies can be purchased from National Office at a nominal cost.

From time to time the C&B needs to be updated because of changes to policy and practice. In order for these amendments to become part of the C&B, they must be approved by members across the country through an instructed vote.

At the fall meeting of the national council/board, 10 proposed amendments were adopted for circulation to the membership. In 2026 a vote must be held in every council following the instructed voting process. It is the responsibility of every council president to facilitate the instructed voting procedure for her council.

If you would like more information about the amendments and the voting process for the instructed vote, a Zoom presentation will be offered by Ontario Provincial Past President Linda Squarzolo on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 7:00 pm. The details for attending the presentation can be found on the poster on the following page.



ONTARIO PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF THE  
CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA

**YOU'RE INVITED!**

## INFORMATION SESSION ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CWL CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

### Virtual Presentation

**Presenter:** Ontario Provincial Past President Linda Squarzolo

**Date:** Tuesday, January 20, 2026

**Time:** 7:00 PM (EST)

### Learn About:

- The proposed amendments
- How the instructed vote works
- What council presidents need to do



### Registration Details

**RREGISTER HERE:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84862903126?pwd=xnbm41ranha904yubJHXpRgdjbtGMz.1>

# Minute By Minute

OPC Secretary

Lisa Henry



## **New Year, New Beginnings**

*Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission*

As we step into January 2026, we are invited to embrace the new National theme: Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission. What a fitting call for this season of renewal! A new year always brings fresh opportunities to recommit ourselves to the League's mission, and as Secretaries/Communications officers, we hold a special responsibility: to keep our members connected, informed, and inspired.

Communication is more than sharing information—it is about building bridges. Every email, newsletter, minutes or announcement we send is a chance to spark passion and empower others to live out Christ's mission in their councils, parishes, and communities. When we communicate with clarity, warmth, and consistency, we strengthen the bonds of sisterhood and ensure that no member feels left behind.

This month, let us live out the theme in simple, practical ways:

- **Send a New Year's greeting** to your council members. A short, faith-filled message can uplift spirits and remind everyone they are valued.
- **Highlight the New National theme** in your January communications. Include it in your newsletters, meeting agendas, or social media posts so it becomes a shared focus.
- **Tie in the sub-theme "Blessed are the Poor."** Share a reflection or resource that reminds members of Christ's call to see Him in the marginalized. Even a simple prayer intention for those in need can keep this focus alive.
- **Encourage connection.** Share upcoming events, prayer intentions, or even a "Did you know?" fact about the League to spark conversation.
- Invite participation. Ask members to contribute a reflection, a photo, or a short story for your next newsletter. This not only empowers their voices but also enriches your communications.
- **Practice consistency.** Even a brief monthly update helps members feel informed and engaged. Regular communication is a simple but powerful way to embody the mission.

As we begin this year, may our words and actions ignite passion in others and empower them to carry Christ’s mission forward. And may we never forget that in serving the poor, in spirit and in circumstance, we serve Christ Himself. Together, through faithful communication, we can make 2026 a year of deeper connection, joy, and renewal in the League.

*Ignite our hearts, O Christ, to shine with Your mission—  
Blessed are the poor, in whom Your light dwells*



Resolutions are usually thought of at this time, the beginning of a new year. One definition in the Marriam Webster dictionary for resolution states - a personal expression of will or intent especially in pursuit of a goal.

By that definition resolutions call you to act. The new National Theme has been unveiled—**Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission**. This new theme is a perfect resolution for all members. Just as a resolution calls us to ACT, so too does the new theme. The focus for the national theme is “Blessed are the Poor” (Matthew 5:3). What tangible actions can we do to help the poor? To help inspire you and your parish council, a calendar has been created with suggestions and is available on the National website, under the **Inform** tab, click **news releases**, then **Joint Communiqué #02**, November 30,2025. Spend some time reflecting on this focus and bring your ideas and suggestions to your parish council. Discuss these with your sisters in the League and see what happens. Each council will be tracking their results and all will be shared through the National website. A wonderful way to feel the impact of the League in our communities, provinces and country while continuing to inspire our fellow sisters in the League. **Let’s all IGNITE!**

Submitted by Wilma Vanderzwaag  
OPC Administrative Assistant

## ***A Renewed Spiritual Journey***

*Happy New Year! May you receive joyous Blessings in 2026.*



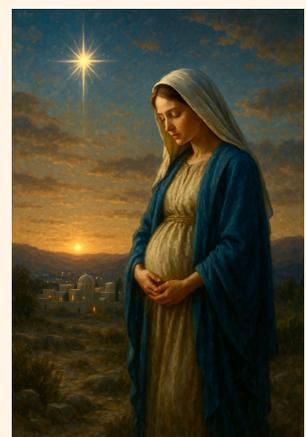
The closing of St. Peter's Basilica's Holy Door on January 6th marks the end of the Catholic Church's Holy Jubilee Year. Although the Jubilee is over, we continue to carry the spirit of hope to deepen our relationship with God and see Him with our hearts in all those we encounter.

New year resolutions often center on personal goals like health, growth and relationships. What if this year included a resolution to build Holy Habits?

We have our own faith rituals but think of something new to nurture and deepen your relationship with God. There are many Catholic resources available to help us deepen our experience with the Holy Spirit and personal relationship with Jesus. Some might include simple acts of reflection, prayer, spiritual meditation, lectio divina, icon reading or writing and a small faith group...anything that we feel brings us closer to God.

We believe in the gift of spiritual joy, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we are inspired to share our joy and His love with others.

Our Parish Priest in his homily said Mary's profound 'yes' and total trust and openness to God is a model for all of us to follow. We are called to live our own Fiat by saying yes to God's will. With small everyday moments to foster holiness, let us be part of the plan with Mary... *let it be done.*



The symbol of the heart has often been used to express our deep love of Jesus Christ. This works well with our new National Presidents' theme: *Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission.*



Betty Colaneri's inspiration for the theme came from the Sacred Heart of Jesus and God's infinite love. *'The large heart symbolizing the Sacred Heart of Jesus with the crown of thorns reminds us that we have been saved by Jesus' Passion. The white colour symbolizes the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven to set the heart on fire. The red and white colours together symbolize Divine Mercy.'*

*The crown of thorns on the right serves as a reminder of Jesus' Passion and ultimate sacrifice. The smaller heart inside the large heart symbolizes members' hearts, enflamed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus surrounds and protects us with His own heart.'*

We are called to ignite a spiritual fire within each of us and share his love with a faith that is on fire.

The national focus of "Blessed are the Poor," is closely connected to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In the last National Communication Package, the national chairpersons of faith, service and social justice provided suggestions on how members can participate in this call to mission through action.

As we continue our journey of new beginnings, re-ignite God's love inside you, help others feel the fire of God's love and presence within them. Be the first flame!



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

Plan now to attend! 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

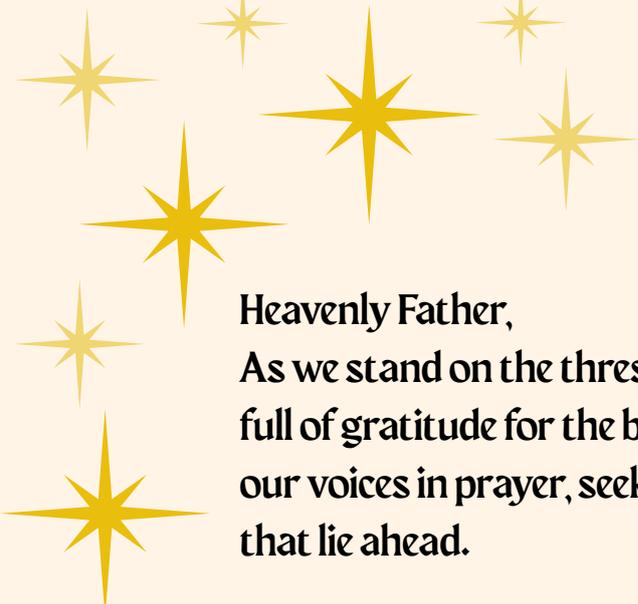
**EMAIL:** reservations@valhallahotel.ca

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



## A Prayer for the New Year

Heavenly Father,

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, we come before You with hearts full of gratitude for the blessings of the past and hope for the future. We lift our voices in prayer, seeking Your divine presence and guidance in the days that lie ahead.

Lord Jesus, we thank You for the gift of life and the countless blessings You have bestowed upon us. As we enter into this new year, we humbly ask for Your abundant grace to be upon us. Grant us the wisdom to make righteous choices, the strength to face challenges, and the courage to follow Your path.

Heavenly Father, we pray for the precious gift of peace in our lives and in the world around us. May Your peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Let Your calming presence be felt in our homes, communities, and nations. Bring reconciliation where there is discord, understanding where there is confusion, and unity where there is division.

Lord, we also lift up our physical and mental well-being to You. In the name of Jesus, we ask for Your healing touch to rest upon those who are facing illnesses or challenges to their health. Strengthen their bodies, comfort their spirits, and grant them the assurance of Your love and care. May the year ahead be marked by a renewed sense of vitality and health.

We entrust our plans, dreams, and aspirations for the coming year into Your hands, O Lord. May everything we do be guided by Your will and directed towards Your glory. Help us to be a source of love, compassion, and encouragement to those around us.

In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen.

# service

Sue Lubowitz



While doing some reading over the last few months, I came across this line “Are we people who go to church, or come from church?” Of course, we are both (or should be!). The same can be asked of members. Are we members who go to meetings or are we members who come from meetings enthusiastic about our capacity to assist where needed?

St. John Chrysostom said many times “If you cannot find Christ in the beggar at the church door, you will not find Him in the chalice.” As Service Chairs, this is our mission mandate: to find Christ in others outside the church door. The new national League theme, so well described by National President Betty Colaneri in the Fall 2025 issue of The Canadian League magazine, reminds us that to do so we must “ignite our passion”.

Has your council identified their passion or their particular charism based on the needs of the parish, of the local community or even further afield? The sub-theme of “Blessed are the Poor” brings with it so many possibilities for councils to act. The national standing committee chairs have outlined a full year of actions for councils. Councils received this document in the November 30 mailing. The Service Advent Calendar can continue to be used well into the New Year, until the “40 Days of Service” Lenten guide is released.

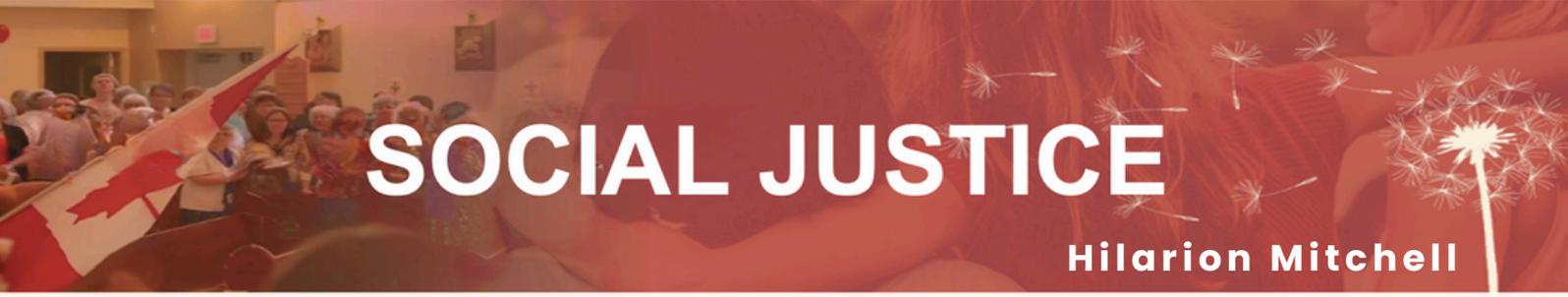
## **May I suggest the following opportunities for service?**

**Bell Let's Talk Day 2026** is scheduled for January 21, 2026, marking the 16th annual event dedicated to mental health awareness, with the theme focusing on “giving mental health the moment it deserves” by taking time to care for oneself, support others, and raise awareness. To help you in your efforts to focus on this, further resources can be found at <https://letstalk.bell.ca/tools-and-resources/>

**National Ribbon Skirt Day** is celebrated annually on January 4th in Canada, honouring Indigenous women and girls by promoting cultural pride, identity, and resilience through the symbolic ribbon skirt, inspired by a young girl's experience of being shamed for wearing one at school. The day, established by a Canadian Act of Parliament in 2022, calls for decolonization and learning Indigenous histories and cultures, with people wearing ribbon skirts to show solidarity and celebrate heritage. A council may wish to hold an educational event to highlight Indigenous history, culture, and the importance of traditional regalia.

**The World Day of War Orphans** is observed on January 6th to raise awareness about the millions of children orphaned by conflicts, highlighting their immense physical, emotional, and social challenges, promoting support for their needs, and advocating for their rights to education, care, and protection. The **Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA)** is a papal humanitarian aid agency and a national CWL Voluntary Fund that provides significant support to war-affected individuals, including orphans, in various regions. CNEWA works across the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India and Eastern Europe and the need is great. Councils are asked to contribute to this fund.





# SOCIAL JUSTICE

Hilarion Mitchell

***Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission ...  
Blessed are the Poor (Matthew 5:3)***

**Happy New Year!** January 1<sup>st</sup> marks World Day of Peace and January 6<sup>th</sup> signals the close of the Jubilee Pilgrims of Hope, “Hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5). There is much to be hopeful at the start of each New Year. We usher in 2026 with our new national theme ***Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission*** for the next two years with the focus on ***“Blessed are the Poor”*** (Matthew 5:3). Refer to the *National Theme Activity Calendar* on how the three standing committees will bring the theme to fruition monthly.

Social justice is about charity and advocacy. Issues of poverty is about working to change the conditions that cause suffering. We are asked to look beyond the immediate needs and address the systems and structures that keep people in poverty. To understand the issues and actions required to address poverty, national has reference the *Poverty Trends 2025: Pathways from Poverty to Rights & Well-being*. The Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) releases an annual report on Poverty Trends reports with a review of data on poverty in Canada and the state of government action and a vision for how we can move forward.

The report indicates that the story of poverty in Canada is one of persistent inequity and unmet Treaty and human rights obligations. The report spotlights examples of proven policy solutions that can put us on a pathway to end poverty and advance rights and well-being.

**Guidelines for Petitions:** A petition is a form of public voice through a collection of signatures expressing an issue of concern and requesting the government or an organization to take specific action. (National Manual of Policy and Procedure Appendix 12: Briefs, Petitions, Letters, Emails & Postcards pages 177-179).

- **House of Commons (or Government/Minister/MP)**
- **Ontario Provincial Government (Legislative Assembly of Ontario)**

*See next page for guidelines....*

# SOCIAL JUSTICE

Hilarion Mitchell

## House of Commons (or Government/Minister/MP)

Paper petitions must be physical documents with original signatures, must have a minimum of 25 valid signatures with names and addresses, originals only, no photocopies, pasted or transferred signatures, etc. E-petitions (Online) require MP sponsorship, written directly on the official platform; ≤250 words, requires support from five Canadian citizens or residents before submission, must collect at least 500 valid signatures, etc.

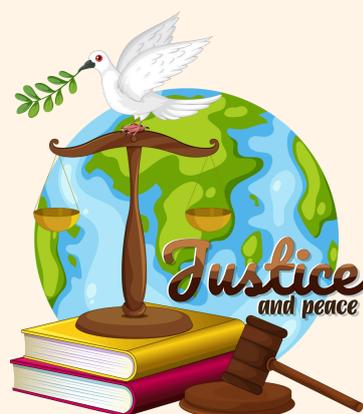
Refer to *Guidelines for Petitions - Public Petitions - House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Third edition, 2017 - Procedural Info - House of Commons of Canada*

## Guidelines for petitions to the Ontario Provincial Government (Legislative Assembly of Ontario)

The petition must be addressed to the Legislative Assembly Ontario. All signatures must be original, must be residents of Ontario, must be written, typewritten, or printed, no mailed, faxed, photocopied, or online petitions are not allowed. Refer to *Petitions*

## January Social Justice Observance Days

- **Jan. 01:** *World Day of Peace* "Peace be with you all" Towards an 'unarmed and disarming' peace,"
- **Jan. 18-25:** *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*
- **Jan. 22:** *Reel Justice Film Housing Insecurity Online 7:00-9:00 pm (EST)*.  
Registration Required



# Beyond the Bake Sale:

## Fresh recipes for Council Fun and Growth

Across Ontario, councils are finding new ways to engage members in purposeful action—initiatives that go beyond fundraising to embody the League’s mission of faith and justice. A powerful example unfolded on October 6, 2025 in **Vaughan, ON**, where a **Stop Human Trafficking flag** was raised in the community.

This event was the fruit of advocacy by the **St. Padre Pio CWL council**, led by their President Debbie Fisher. Through their determination, the council brought visibility to one of the most pressing issues of our time, reminding neighbours and parishioners alike that the League stands with the vulnerable and oppressed. The flag raising was not only symbolic; it ignited conversation, awareness, and solidarity, showing how faith can be lived out in public witness.

Such initiatives reflect the new national theme: *Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission*. Councils are discovering that passion is sparked when members unite around causes that matter deeply, and Christ’s mission is empowered when those causes are brought into the light.

As we begin 2026, councils are encouraged to embrace simple yet impactful actions that embody this theme. Host a prayer service for justice, share educational resources on human trafficking, or invite members to reflect on how their faith calls them to action. Each step, no matter how small, strengthens our bonds of sisterhood and amplifies our collective voice.

Together, we can continue to ignite our passion and empower His mission—  
one flag,  
one prayer,  
one act of justice at a time.

