

World Down Syndrome Day, March 21

During the month of March, CWL members have been turned their focus to the Lenten season of giving. World Down Syndrome Day (WSDS), on March 21st, aligns with this season of giving and offers councils an opportunity to combine advocacy for inclusion with charitable action and tangible giving.

Down syndrome can be diagnosed in unborn children as early as 9 weeks gestational age. While these tests can be helpful by providing parents time to prepare for their child with Down syndrome, the tests are typically used for a different plan: abortion. **Sadly, the overwhelming majority of children diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted.** In Canada, which has one of the lowest Down syndrome abortion rates, the rate is still at a staggering 54%. That rate is 77% in France and nearly 100% in Iceland and Denmark.

By promoting awareness, acceptance, and inclusion we recognize the dignity in all people, especially those with disabilities. On World Down Syndrome Day and every day, the Ontario Provincial Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada gives thanks for the many gifts, talents, and contributions that people with Down syndrome bring to our parishes and communities and offers these suggestions on ways to participate and show our belief in a culture of life:

- **Wear odd socks:** wear bright mismatched socks on March 21 to spark conversation about differences being beautiful
- **Fundraise:** to raise funds for support programs in your community
- **Educate:** focus on learning about Down syndrome to break down stereotypes and promote acceptance

As Pope Francis reminded us: "Nobody can be discarded, because we are all vulnerable. Each one of us is a treasure whom God allows to grow in his or her own way."

To learn more visit: <https://www.worlddownsyndromeday.org/>

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