

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

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Spread the word and enjoy the journey!

Called to Kindness

***“...And be kind to one another,
tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ has forgiven you.”***

Ephesians 4.32



It is humbling to be writing my first newsletter as your provincial president.

The focus that I have chosen during my term is on the virtue of kindness ... which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

I was taught that kindness is a way of life. I strive to live that out each day. I have witnessed many acts of kindness throughout my CWL journey since joining the League in 1990.

Since Past President Colleen Martin handed me the gavel in July, it has been an honour to represent the Ontario Provincial Council at the 106th Annual National Convention in Halifax, including my first national board meetings; to participate in Rosary Sunday at Martyrs Shrine in Midland; to participate in the provincial presidents' roundtable meetings and meetings with National President Betty Colaneri; to attend the 'Prayers Across the Province' Mass at my parish of Our Lady of Hope in Sudbury, and to take part in many other meetings and discussions with our wonderful Ontario provincial team!

In Halifax, the national officers, national spiritual advisor and provincial presidents were all so kind and welcoming, which I appreciated as one of the 'new kids on the block'. As always, my League sisters were there for me.

I recently attended two funerals, one for the husband of a diocesan president and the other for a life member from my home Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie. The words expressed at these celebrations of life, the love shown, the hugs given and received, certainly reflected lives filled with kindness.

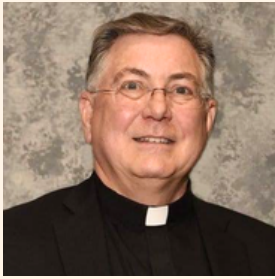
The priest at one of the funerals stated that one of the greatest concerns in our world is convincing people to see Jesus in the face of every person that they meet.

As we journey forward, I leave you with this quote from Mother Teresa:



“If you judge people, you have no time to love them.”

Meet Your OPC Executive



Spiritual Advisor
Bishop Alan Campeau



President
Karen McDonald



Vice-President
Lisa Henry



Secretary
Teresa DiFalco



Treasurer
Lisa Fillingham



Past-President
Colleen Martin



Chairperson of Faith
Kate O'Quinn



Chairperson of
Service
Claudette Langdon



Chairperson of
Social Justice
Patricia Clizia

OPC APPOINTEES



Administrative
Assistant
Susanna Lubowitz



Life Member Liaison
Anna Tremblay



Keeper of the
Book of Life
Joyce Cotter



Screening Officer
Jeannie Coleman

DIOCESAN PRESIDENTS



Hamilton
Diocesan President
Laura Grint



Hearst-Moosonee
Diocesan President
Nancy Pye



Kingston
Diocesan President
Bernadette Veitch



London
Diocesan President
Denise Lalonde Morris



Ottawa-Cornwall
Diocesan President
Mary Ellen James



Pembroke
Diocesan President
Louise Rockburn



Peterborough
Diocesan President
Wendy Tedford



St. Catharines
Diocesan President
Kate Montague



Sault Ste. Marie
Diocesan President
Kathleen Niro



Thunder Bay
Diocesan President
Marion McKay



Timmins
Diocesan President
Peggy MacInnis



Toronto
Diocesan President
Connie Cristinziano

Provincial Convention Highlights

79th Annual Ontario Provincial Convention Thunder Bay, Ontario • July 5–8, 2026

The 79th Annual Ontario Provincial Convention of The Catholic Women's League of Canada brought nearly 300 delegates to Thunder Bay for four days of prayer, learning, leadership, and sisterhood. Hosted at the Valhalla Inn, the convention blended long-cherished CWL traditions with renewed energy under the national theme "Ignite Your Passion; Empower His Mission."

A Warm Welcome to Thunder Bay - Flag Raising

Delegates were greeted with heartfelt messages from Bishop Alan Campeau, Provincial President Colleen Martin, and Thunder Bay Diocesan President Marion McKay. Bishop Campeau's welcome captured the spirit of the week: "Thank you for traveling so far to be in communion with each other!"

Thunder Bay Mayor Ken Boshcoff embraced the League fully—issuing a municipal proclamation declaring CWL Week (July 3–10) and raising the CWL flag at City Hall, symbolizing the League's commitment to service and community.

Opening Day: Prayer, Service & Celebration

Sunday began with registration, waterfront tours, and hands-on service projects supporting local residents facing food insecurity and social isolation. As the program booklet noted, this new initiative allowed members to "touch hearts and make a difference in real lives."

Delegates then traveled to St. Patrick Cathedral for the Opening Ceremony and Eucharistic Celebration. The liturgy—offered "for all living and deceased members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada and Spiritual Advisors"—set a reverent tone for the days ahead.



Faith at the Heart of Convention

Each day began with praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the Liturgy of the Hours, led by Bishop Campeau. The program's rich spiritual content included psalms, canticles, and prayers such as: "Lord, show us the radiance of your mercy."

Monday's ***Crowning of Mary*** was one of the most moving moments of the convention. Diocesan Presidents placed roses at Mary's feet in memory of deceased members, while the National President Betty Colaneri added a white rose for deceased spiritual advisors. The ceremony concluded with the Crowning of Mary as Our Lady of Good Counsel by Provincial President Colleen Martin, accompanied by the hymn Ave Maria.

Leadership, Learning & League Business

The convention offered leadership development, reports, and governance activities.

Where Faith Grows, Love Flows – A two-part spiritual formation session was led by Bishop Campeau, Claudette Langdon, Cathy McKinney, and Wilma Vanderzwaag.

Diocesan President & Officer/Administrative Assistant Reports – Showcasing local achievements across Ontario.

Life Member Commissioning – Sue Lubowitz of Toronto was blessed as a new Life Member. Bishop Campeau prayed: "Receive the sign of the Cross on your hands... that you may know God's presence in your life."

Resolutions Dialogue – Delegates engaged in thoughtful discussion on provincial resolutions addressing homelessness, housing security, and community support.

Vote on Amendments to the Constitution & Bylaws – Members participated in key governance decisions shaping the League's future.

Soft Launch of the New OPC Website – A milestone in modernizing communication and accessibility.



A joyful banquet featuring a raffle, silent auction, and social hour closed out the day on Tuesday evening.

Election & Installation of the 2026–2028 Provincial Executive

During Wednesday's Eucharistic Celebration at St. Agnes' Parish, the newly elected **Ontario Provincial Council Officers** were installed:

President: Karen McDonald

Past President: Colleen Martin

Vice President: Lisa Henry

Secretary: Teresa DiFalco

Treasurer: Lisa Fillingham

Faith Chairperson: Kate O'Quinn

Service Chairperson: Claudette Langdon

Social Justice Chairperson: Patricia Clizia

Appointees:

Administrative Assistant: Susanna Lubowitz

Life Member Liaison: Anna Tremblay

Keeper of the Book of Life: Joyce Cotter

Screening Officer: Jeannie Coleman



Final Day: Vision, Gratitude & Sending Forth

Wednesday's program included a theme presentation from National President Betty Colaneri and the Incoming President's Vision from Karen McDonald.

The Closing Mass at St. Agnes Parish brought the convention to a prayerful conclusion, sending members home with renewed purpose and unity.

A Convention Rooted in Faith, Service and Sisterhood



National Convention Highlights

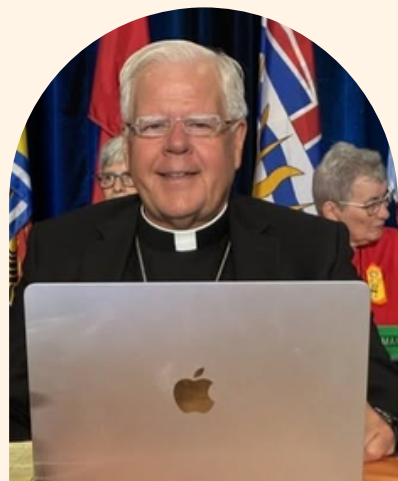
106th Annual National Convention A Joy-Filled Gathering of Faith, Purpose & Sisterhood

The 106th Annual CWL National Convention in Halifax was a powerful reminder of who we are as Catholic women: a community rooted in faith, united in purpose, and called to lead with compassion in a changing world. Delegates returned home renewed, inspired, and eager for the year ahead.

A League That Listens and Leads

Members heard updates on national correspondence with government leaders on issues close to our hearts — Knowing our advocacy continues to reach decision-makers affirmed that our collective voice matters. Even when responses are slow, we trust that no prayer is ever wasted.

National President Betty Colaneri reflected on her first year of leadership, highlighting the transition to our new National Director of Administration, Necole Sommersell, and ongoing government engagement on issues affecting Catholic Christians and Canadian society.



Spiritual Encouragement: “Your Presence Matters”

National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Bergie encouraged members to “toot our own horn,” reminding us that our grassroots leadership is one of the Church’s greatest strengths. At the opening Mass, Archbishop Brian Young asked delegates to return home and thank every member for her faithful service. Our work is seen. Our work is valued. Our work makes a difference.

Democracy in Action

All ten Instructed Votes were adopted, demonstrating the League’s deep respect for member-driven decision-making at every level. Five national resolutions were thoughtfully debated and adopted, strengthening our advocacy on issues ranging from disability housing to national basic income.

Convention Speakers: A Call to Compassion, Courage & Wisdom



Dr. Cory Labrecque – “Stay Awake with Me”

Dr. Labrecque offered a profound reflection on dignity, vulnerability, and presence in a broken world. Drawing on St. Theresa Benedicta’s words — “The world doesn’t need what women have; the world needs what women are” — he reminded us that our compassion, attentiveness, and willingness to accompany others are powerful gifts.

He invited us to reflect deeply on:

Passion — not only enthusiasm, but the willingness to surrender ourselves to God’s will.

Poverty — recognizing those who lack companionship, hope, or support.

Vulnerability — understanding that every person is “woundable,” and our words must build up, not tear down.

Dignity — inherent in every human being, regardless of circumstance.

Presence — the ministry of “covering,” comforting, and accompanying those who suffer.

He also highlighted Canada’s growing loneliness epidemic and reminded us that our ministry of presence — simply showing up — is a profound act of hope. As CWL members, we are called to stay awake, notice those who are hurting, and walk with them.

Giancarlo Brotto

“Ignited to Lead: Women of Faith in the Age of AI”

Giancarlo Brotto challenged us to step boldly into the rapidly evolving world of Artificial Intelligence. AI is transforming workplaces, communication, and society — and Catholic women must help shape its ethical, safe, and responsible use.



He explained the phases of AI development (Ignite, Implement, Infuse) and the types of AI (ANI, AGI, ASI), noting that Canada lags behind other nations in AI research and training. This is a critical moment for advocacy, education, and moral leadership.

His message was clear:

Science and technology are gifts from God — but they require wisdom, discernment, and human connection.

We must protect privacy, encourage genuine relationships, and guide young people toward healthy, responsible use of AI. The CWL has an important role in shaping a culture of encounter in an AI-enabled world.



Bishop Alan Campeau shared moving reflections from his spontaneous pilgrimage to Rome with CWL sisters – a journey that became a deep encounter with grace.

He encouraged members to approach pilgrimage with an open heart, take quiet moments for prayer, and welcome the foreign priests who serve our communities with great sacrifice.

His final encouragement:

Start saving your nickels now – so when the opportunity comes, you can say YES.

Why Convention Matters

National Convention is more than business. It is more than debate.

It is Sisterhood. Mission. Renewal. Purpose.

We gather to listen, learn, discern, and celebrate the work God is doing through us. We return home strengthened, informed, and inspired to lead with courage in our parishes and communities.



If you have never attended National Convention, let this be your invitation. If you have attended before, let this be your reminder of the joy waiting for you. Next year promises to be just as meaningful – and we want you there with us.



August 8 - 11, 2027
Winnipeg, MB

*Come
join
us!*

Catholic Girls League

In the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie

Purpose and Benefits: The Catholic Girls League (CGL) gives girls a supportive, safe place to grow in faith together. It fosters friendship, encourages service within the parish and wider community, develops leadership skills, and helps members build meaningful relationships.



Activities include retreat days, walking rosary, and pilgrimages, service projects making a difference, fundraising – ice cream after Mass! Games and laughter, and painting. The possibilities are endless!

Growth in North Bay: The CGL began in the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie in North Bay in February 2024 with ten members. Since then, the group has continued to grow and now has 14 active members. Some former members who left to pursue post-secondary education still attend occasionally, maintaining friendships and mentoring those who now serve as officers.



Supporting Expansion: The North Bay CGL played a vital role in supporting the development of two new groups in the Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie regions. Members shared testimonials through the “What Makes You Tick?” survey, and their words encouraged those who attended the Sudbury meet-and-greet. A gathering in Sault Ste. Marie is planned next.

Spiritual Guidance

The CGL also benefits from the support and guidance of spiritual advisors. By attending events and activities, leading prayer services, and guiding retreats, they encourage members to deepen and openly live their faith. The spiritual advisors recognize the vital role the CGL plays in nurturing girls as they grow into the Catholic women and leaders of tomorrow.

Testimonials

“I felt inspired to join the CGL because I could clearly sense that this would be a group focused on developing faith in a community, and in a community that would allow me to develop leadership skills.”

“Opportunities to help and serve the community whether it’s through charity or fundraisers, or volunteering, and fun activities that helps boost our confidence and courage.”

“At CGL, you have a family.”

Collaborative effort of Christina Pierobon, Sudbury Leader, Lisa Henry, North Bay Leader, Kathleen Niro, Diocesan President

Stories of the Heart and Soul of CWL Sisterhood

"The Lord never gives us what He doesn't think we can handle."



I have said this many, many times. After my husband, Ed and our family pet, Barney, died under tremendously heart-breaking circumstances, I did not know what direction to take or what to do. The first question the police officers asked me after delivering the horrendous news was what funeral home should they call.

My Girl Guide motto *Be Prepared* was something I swear by. Ed and I had just revamped and finalized our wills and funeral arrangements. This was important to me as I wanted to make sure Ed would be taken care of, if something happened to me.

After the police left, I called a few friends and they arrived at my house within minutes. Victim Services knocked on my door about an hour later. Then the reality of the situation set in. As it was now 3:00 a.m. I just couldn't call any of my husband's siblings who live all over Canada and the United States or my immediate family who weathered similar situations previously. Any disaster that encompassed our family always resulted in fatal phone calls between 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

The time slipped by and as day light appeared I needed to inform people of what had happened. First, I notified family and then I began to notify my CWL sisters.



The phone chains started around 9:00 a.m. and my closest and dearest sisters were notified. At 1:00 p.m. that afternoon the first three of many sisters, knocked on my door with hugs and prayers. One of these ladies had buried her husband the week before. From that moment I knew, and physically felt the genuine love of these many others.

There hasn't been a day since that fatal police visit that I haven't been called, texted, emailed, received cards and Mass intentions. I am wrapped in three beautiful prayer shawls that definitely surround you with love and prayer. I feel this whenever I become overwhelmed and wrap one around me.



Many of my CWL sisters who know me and have heard me talk, know that I have said repeatedly The Catholic Women's League of Canada is the greatest organization in the country. I am a living example of how these women and spiritual advisors have surrounded me with their love from across the country. My sisters of the League did not shy away at this devastating time in my life. They walked toward me and embraced me with love.

This help will not diminish as time goes by but will be a phone call or a text away. Some people have wondered how I could attend certain functions shortly after my husband's death. Well ladies, the CWL is the only normal that I have in my life right now, and since the Lord has chosen a new path in life for me, I am so grateful to have all of you for Faith, Fulfillment and Joy. Words cannot express my gratitude for all of you!

*May Our Lady of Good Counsel wrap her arms around you
and keep you safe.*

Denise Lalonde Morris
London Diocesan President



Stories of the Heart and Soul of CWL Sisterhood

A Pilgrimage of Sisterhood: Celebrating an 80th Birthday in Antigonish

Returning to Antigonish for my 80th birthday—the town where I was born and the parish where I was baptized—became far more than a personal milestone. It became a living example of the sisterhood at the heart of the Catholic Women’s League.

Pilgrims: Annette Dutrisac,
Anna Tremblay, Lisa Henry and
Patricia Clizia



Father Daniel MacLennan, Rector of St Ninian’s Cathedral, showing Anna the record of her Baptism.



What began as a simple dream to go back to the church where I was baptized 80 years ago was lovingly shaped into reality by CWL sisters who gave their time, energy, and encouragement without hesitation. Their planning, companionship, and quiet acts of kindness reflected the League’s spirit of generosity and unity. They didn’t just help me celebrate a birthday; they helped me honour my roots, my faith, and the journey that has shaped my life.

Submitted by Life Member Anna Tremblay